美味しんぼ

29

雁屋 哲・花咲アキラ

スピリッツコミックス好評発売中／

美味しんぼ（雁屋哲・花咲アキラ）… 1～29集
なぜか笑介（聖日出夫）…… 1～26集
F〈エフ〉（六田登）…… 1～20集
YAWARA！（浦沢直樹）…… 1～17集
マドンナ（くじらいいく子）…… 1～16集
ジパング少年（いわしげ孝）…… 1～9集
ツルモク独身寮（窪之内英策）…… 1～8集
神の左手悪魔の右手（様図かずお）… 1～6集
男樹（本宮ひろ志）…… 1～6集
あさってDANCE（山本直樹）…… 1～6集
出直しといで！（一色まこと）…… 1～4集
天使派リョウ（狩撫麻礼・中村真理子）…… 1～4集
以蔵のキモチ（佐藤宏之）…… 1～3集
両国花錦闘士（岡野玲子）…… 1～3集
14歳（様図かずお）…… 1～2集
OFFERED（小池一夫・池上遼一）… 1～2集
ハーフな分だけ（星里もちる）…… 1集
ZERO（松本大洋）…… 1集

装丁／海野一雄　カバー・フォト／坂井信彦

美味しんぼ 29 美味しい暗号 作・雁屋 哲 画・花咲アキラ ◆ 小学館 BC2039

BIG COMICS

美味しんぼ 29

美味しい暗号

作・雁屋 哲
画・花咲アキラ

◆

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花咲アキラ

■ビックコミックス

美味しんぼ……Ⅰ～29集発売中

■スピリッツコミックス好評発売中／■

めぞん一刻（高橋留美子）……全15巻
妻をめとらば（柳沢きみお）……全15巻
傷追い人（小池一夫・池上遼一）……全11巻
Cryingフリーマン(小池一夫・池上遼一)……全９巻
赤い鳩〈アビル〉(小池一夫・池上遼一)……全６巻
二匹のブル（瀬叩龍・岩重孝）……全10巻
わたしは真悟（楳図かずお）……全10巻
あさってDANCE(山本直樹)……全７巻
極めてかもしだ(山本直樹)……全６巻
はっぱ64（山本直樹）……全３巻
キスより簡単（石坂啓）……全６巻
夢みるトマト（石坂啓）……全６巻
アレルギー戦士（石坂啓）……全１巻
MONEY MOON（石坂啓）……全３巻
スローニン（吉田聡）……全４巻
ブルー・ジーン(くじらいいくこ)……全３巻
ガルルル（むつ利之）……全２巻
表萬家裏萬家（澤井健）……全２巻
りざべーしょんプリーズ(細野不二彦)全２巻
あどりぶシネ倶楽部(細野不二彦)……全１巻
うにばーしてぃBOYS（細野不二彦）全１巻
かぼちゃ白書(六田登・タモツ)……全１巻
座・スターダスト（国友やすゆき）…全１巻
美紅・舞子（西村しのぶ）……全１巻
胡桃（佐藤宏之）……全１巻

美味しんぼ

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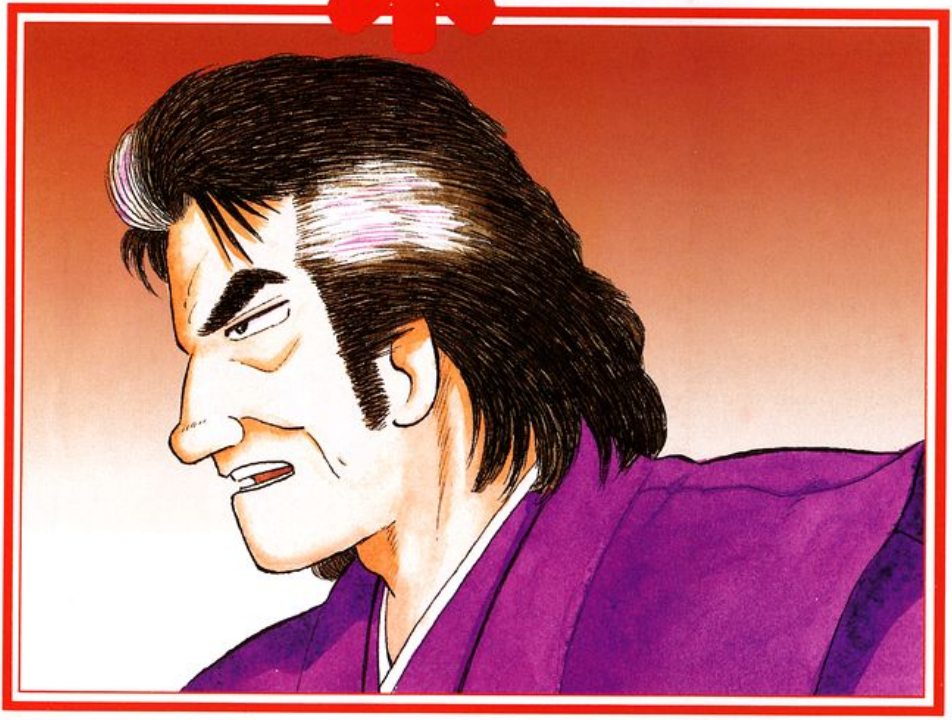
画・花咲アキラ

29 美味しい暗号

■表紙・あわびのシャブシャブ、中扉はホタテの蒸したもの、裏表紙は、カキの揚げたもの。
調理／REGAL RESTAURANT（オーストラリア、シドニー）　TEL. 61-02-261-8988

美味(おい)しんぼ



美味(おい)しんぼ

29 美味しい暗号

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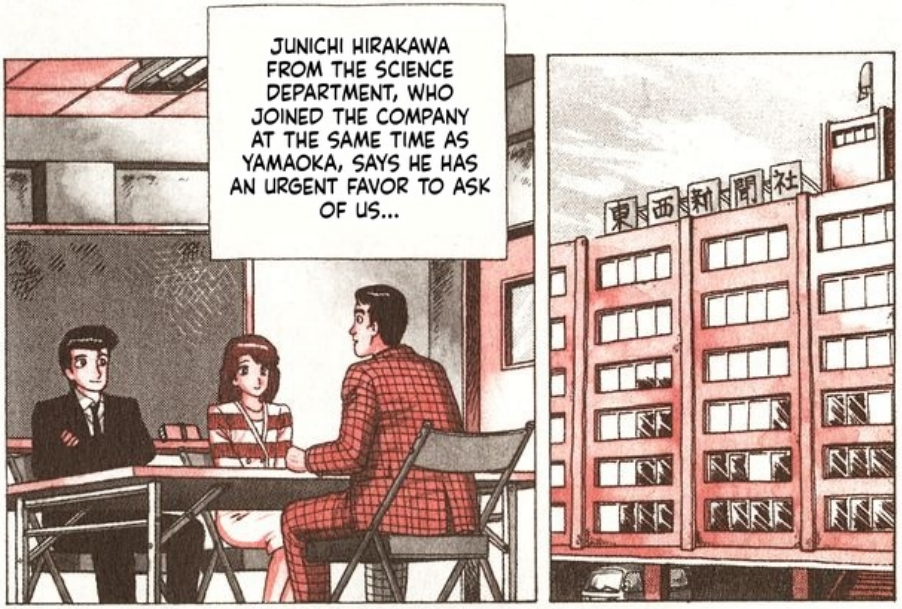
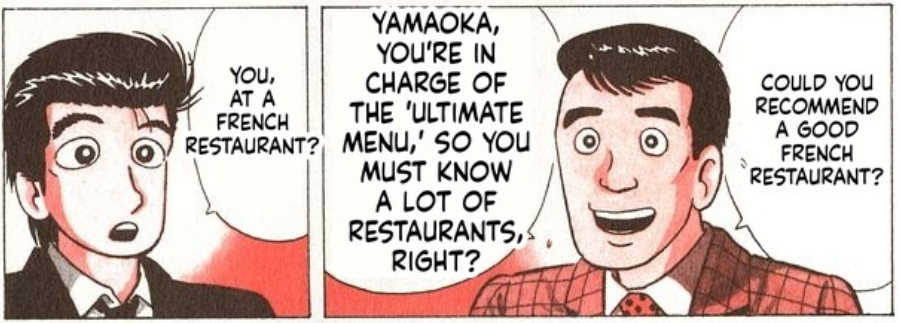
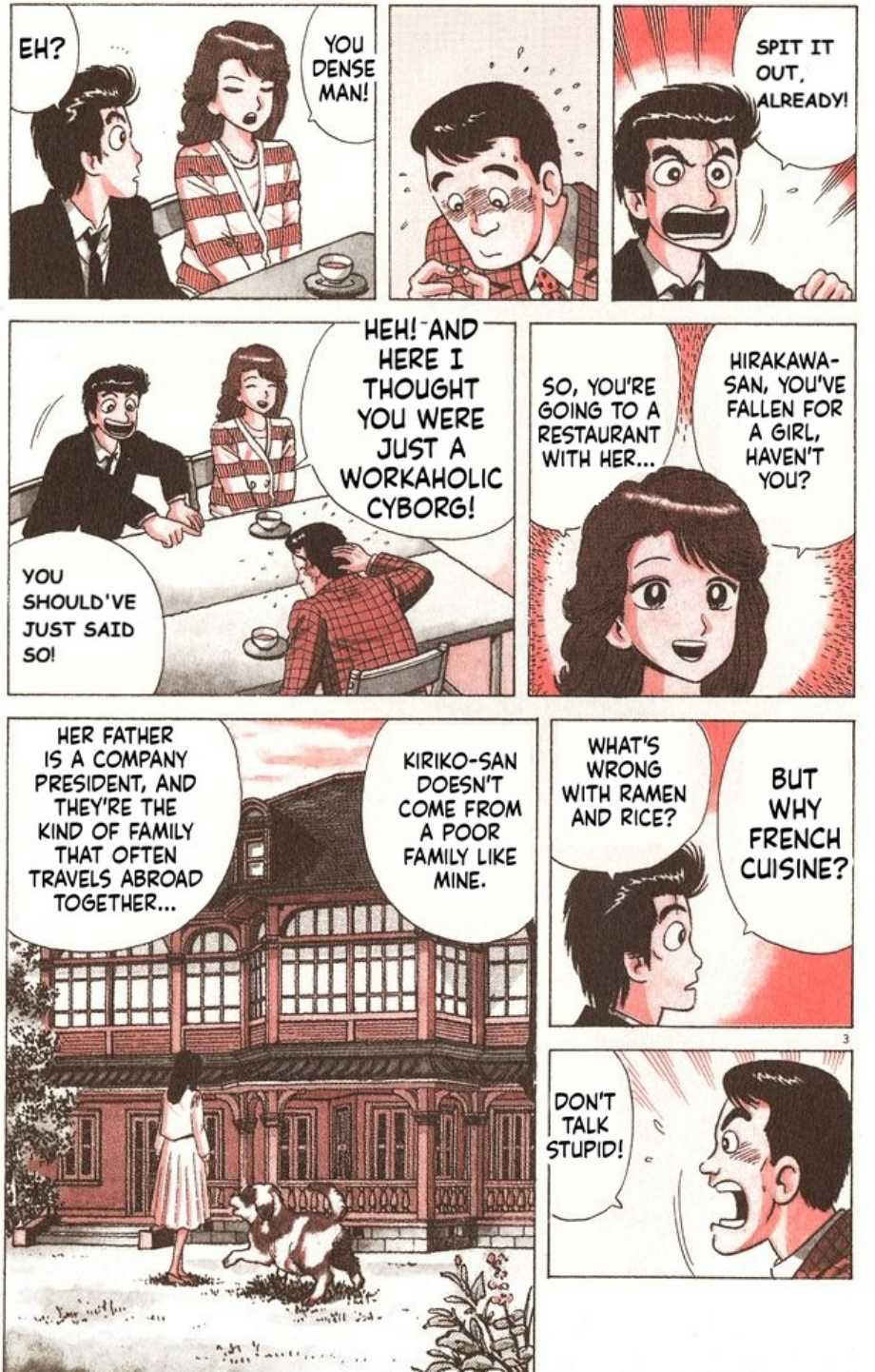
第1話
フランス料理と
ラーメンライス


JUNICHI HIRAKAWA FROM THE SCIENCE DEPARTMENT, WHO JOINED THE COMPANY AT THE SAME TIME AS YAMAOKA, SAYS HE HAS AN URGENT FAVOR TO ASK OF US...
東西料問社


YOU, AT A FRENCH RESTAURANT?
YAMAOKA, YOU'RE IN CHARGE OF THE 'ULTIMATE MENU,' SO YOU MUST KNOW A LOT OF RESTAURANTS, RIGHT?
COULD YOU RECOMMEND A GOOD FRENCH RESTAURANT?

モジ モジ
THE TRUTH IS, WELL...
I THOUGHT YOU WERE A RAMEN-AND-RICE SPECIALIST.
WHAT'S BROUGHT THIS ON ALL OF A SUDDEN?
2
WELL...
WHAT'S WRONG?
DON'T START WITH THAT.

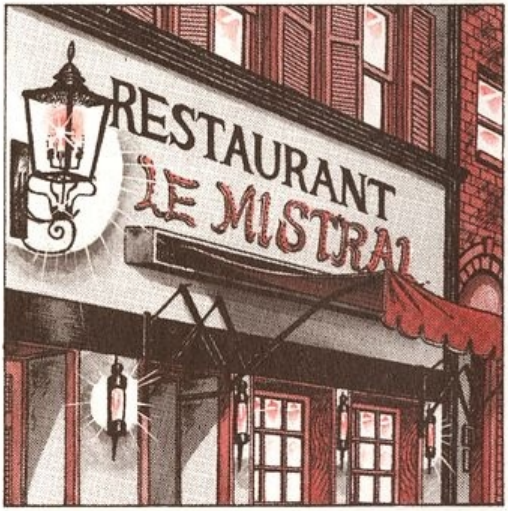

EH?
YOU DENSE MAN!
SPIT IT OUT, ALREADY!
HEH! AND HERE I THOUGHT YOU WERE JUST A WORKAHOLIC CYBORG!
YOU SHOULD'VE JUST SAID SO!
SO, YOU'RE GOING TO A RESTAURANT WITH HER...
HIRAKAWA-SAN, YOU'VE FALLEN FOR A GIRL, HAVEN'T YOU?
HER FATHER IS A COMPANY PRESIDENT, AND THEY'RE THE KIND OF FAMILY THAT OFTEN TRAVELS ABROAD TOGETHER...
KIRIKO-SAN DOESN'T COME FROM A POOR FAMILY LIKE MINE.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH RAMEN AND RICE?
BUT WHY FRENCH CUISINE?
3
DON'T TALK STUPID!

I'M SORRY.
FINE, I'LL FIND YOU A SUITABLE RESTAURANT.
HMPH, SO YOU'RE TRYING TO ACT COOL AND GET A GIRL TO LIKE YOU...
YOU CAN'T EXACTLY SERVE RAMEN AND RICE TO A YOUNG LADY FROM A FAMILY LIKE THAT.
IF YOU GUYS DON'T COME WITH ME, I WON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT TO ORDER OR HOW TO EAT IT.
FRENCH CUISINE IS SO FUSSY ABOUT HOW YOU ORDER FROM THE MENU AND TABLE MANNERS, RIGHT?
I WANT YOU AND KURITA-SAN TO COME ALONG WITH ME TOO.
SORRY, BUT WHILE I'M AT IT, I HAVE ONE MORE FAVOR TO ASK.
WHAT?
4
THANK YOU!
GOOD GRIEF! A GROWN MAN SHOULDN'T BE BLUBBERING OVER THIS! FINE, I'LL DO IT!
I'M BEGGING YOU LIKE THIS, SEE? HAHAHA!
YAMAOKA~~, I'M COUNTING ON YOU~~!

EVEN SO, PUTTING ON AIRS WITH FRENCH CUISINE... THERE'S NO NEED TO GO EAT SOMETHING HE'S NOT USED TO.

MR. HIRAKAWA IS SUCH A SERIOUS, PURE-HEARTED, AND KIND MAN.

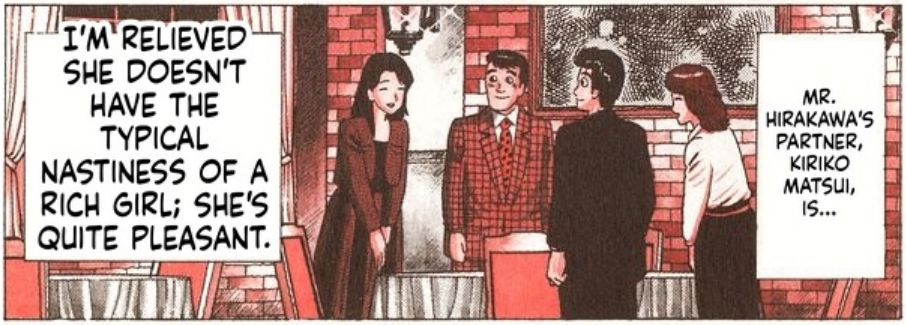
IT'S A DISPLAY OF HIS ENTHUSIASM AND DESIRE TO MAKE MS. KIRIKO HAPPY.
IT'S NOT ABOUT VANITY.


RESTAURANT
LE MISTRAL

HEH... IS THAT SO...?

HMPH!
HONESTLY, YOU REALLY DON'T UNDERSTAND THE HUMAN HEART, DO YOU?

5


I'M RELIEVED SHE DOESN'T HAVE THE TYPICAL NASTINESS OF A RICH GIRL; SHE'S QUITE PLEASANT.
MR. HIRAKAWA'S PARTNER, KIRIKO MATSUI, IS...

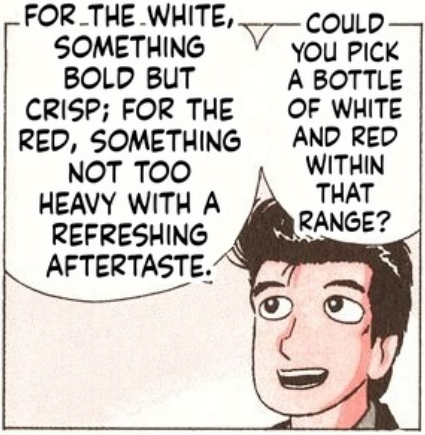
HE TAUGHT YOU WELL, AND THEN GAVE YOU SUCH A BEAUTY...
HEH, THEN HE'S LITERALLY A MENTOR TO YOU, HIRAKAWA.
I WAS INTRODUCED TO HIM BY THAT UNCLE...
MY UNCLE WAS MR. HIRAKAWA'S PROFESSOR BACK IN UNIVERSITY.
WOULD YOU LIKE AN APERITIF...?
EH?
MY GOODNESS...
NO, REALLY, THANK YOU SO MUCH...
SCOTCH, MAKE IT A DOUBLE.
U-UHM... THEN, I'LL HAVE A SCOTCH AND WATER.
MUST BE NICE, I WANT A DRINK TOO.
SCOTCH WITH WATER, HUH...
WH-? Y... YES, UNDERSTOOD.

9 *TL NOTE: CREME DE CASSIS IS A BLACKCURRENT FLAVORED LIQUEUR. THE COCKTAIL IS NAMED FOR FELIX KIR, THE MAYOR OF DIJON DURING WWII, WHO WAS A FAN OF THE DRINK.

YEAH, THERE SEEM TO BE A LOT OF OPTIONS, BUT HOW ABOUT THIS ME-ME-MENU... DÉGUSTATION?
I WONDER WHAT'S GOOD HERE...
TH... THIS IS MY FIRST TIME AT THIS RESTAURANT,
IS IT OKAY TO BE THAT DEMANDING?
IT EVEN SAYS RIGHT HERE ON THE MENU: 'PLEASE TRY THE ME-ME-MENU... DÉGUSTATION.'
THE CHEF HERE HAS A PHILOSOPHY OF USING EVERYTHING IN HIS ARSENAL TO MAKE SURE THE CUSTOMERS ENJOY THEMSELVES.
WE'LL LEAVE IT TO THE CHEF TO SERVE SEVERAL SMALL PLATES OF TODAY'S RECOMMENDATIONS.
THAT WAY, WE'LL SEE HIS FULL RANGE OF SKILL AND PERSONALITY.
WOW, THAT SOUNDS LIKE FUN!
8
PLUS, YOU GET TO EAT MANY DIFFERENT DISHES AT ONCE, SO IT'S THE PERFECT WAY TO LEARN ABOUT FRENCH FOOD!
IF WE LET THE CHEF DECIDE, HIRAKAWA-SAN WON'T HAVE TO STRUGGLE WITH THE MENU SINCE HE'S NOT FAMILIAR WITH FRENCH CUISINE.
ME NEITHER.
YOU'RE RIGHT, LET'S GO WITH THAT.

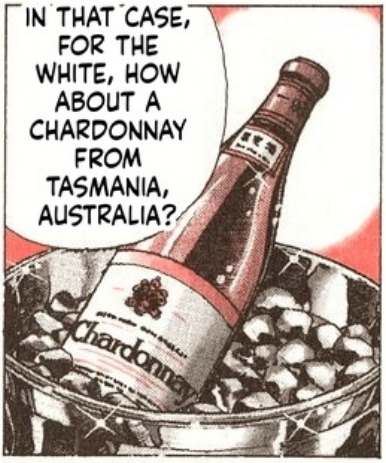
うーん…うっ
SHALL I BRING THE WINE LIST?
Y-YAMAOKA, DRINK WHATEVER YOU LIKE... JUST NOTHING EXPENSIVE.
LEAVE IT TO ME.
I'LL SHOW YOU HOW TO CHOOSE THE ULTIMATE WINE!
HEH.
BUT MY FATHER SAID YOU HAVE TO STUDY INCREDIBLY HARD TO BECOME A WINE CONNOISSEUR.
WE, UH, WOULD LIKE THE MMM-MENU... DÉGUSTATION...
YAMAOKA IS IN CHARGE OF THE 'ULTIMATE MENU,' SO HE'S ALREADY STUDIED EVERYTHING ABOUT WINE.
OH, WOW.

ON A SALARYMAN'S BUDGET, THOUGH...


COULD YOU PICK A BOTTLE OF WHITE AND RED WITHIN THAT RANGE?
FOR THE WHITE, SOMETHING BOLD BUT CRISP; FOR THE RED, SOMETHING NOT TOO HEAVY WITH A REFRESHING AFTERTASTE.

I SEE.

THE FLAVOR IS ELEGANT, YET POWERFUL, CRISP, AND DELICATE.
TASMANIA HAS VERY STRICT WINE LAWS, SO THE QUALITY IS PURE AND TOP-NOTCH.
I BELIEVE THEY OFFER SEVERAL TIMES THE VALUE OF THEIR PRICE.


IN THAT CASE, FOR THE WHITE, HOW ABOUT A CHARDONNAY FROM TASMANIA, AUSTRALIA?
Chardonnay

10

FOR THE RED, HOW ABOUT AN EIGHT-YEAR-OLD MOREY-SAINT-DENIS FROM BURGUNDY?
MOREY SAINT-DENIS
1986

YOU'RE CERTAINLY PASSIONATE ABOUT YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS.
WOW, THEY MUST BE EXCEPTIONALLY GOOD WINES.

ALRIGHT, LET'S GO WITH THAT WHITE.

CERTAINLY, SIR.
IT'S A BIT YOUNG, BUT THE PRICE IS QUITE REASONABLE BECAUSE OF THAT.
IT'S POWERFUL YET ELEGANT, WITH A REFRESHING FINISH.
THAT'S THE ONE! WE'LL GO WITH THAT!
I WAS EXPECTING SOME 'ULTIMATE' WAY TO CHOOSE WINE, BUT YOUR BIG SECRET IS JUST ASKING THE STAFF?
MAN, YOU'RE SUCH A CHEAT, YAMAOKA.
AND NATURALLY, THEY KNOW EXACTLY WHICH BOTTLES IN THEIR CURRENT CELLAR ARE IN THE BEST CONDITION.
THEY'RE PROFESSIONALS, SO THEIR LEVEL OF STUDY AND EXPERIENCE IS INCOMPARABLE TO US AMATEURS,
ANY PROPER FRENCH RESTAURANT HAS A WINE EXPERT CALLED A SOMMELIER.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
IT'S ONLY NATURAL. A RESTAURANT IS A PLACE FOR ENJOYMENT, NOT FOR SUFFERING.
WELL THEN, DINING AT A FRENCH RESTAURANT SOUNDS PRETTY SIMPLE, DOESN'T IT?
TRYING TO CHOOSE A WINE WITHOUT RELYING ON A SOMMELIER IS LIKE ROWING A BOAT OUT TO SEA WITHOUT A NAVIGATOR.
HMM...

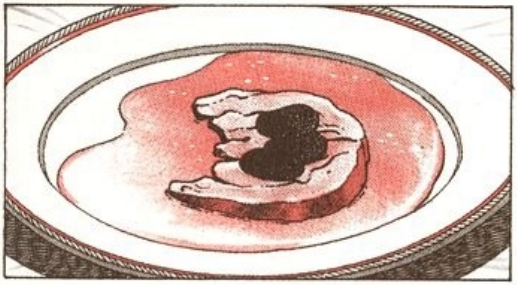
IF YOU DO THAT, IT'S ACTUALLY QUITE EASY TO EAT SOMETHING DELICIOUS.
EVEN WHEN CHOOSING FROM THE MENU, YOU JUST TELL THEM YOUR LIKES AND DISLIKES, HAVE THEM PICK OUT A FEW DISHES, AND ASK HOW EACH ONE IS PREPARED.

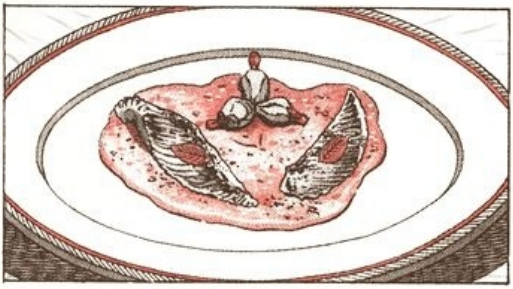
.....

IT'S TRUE THAT YOU CAN'T HAVE ANY FUN IF YOU'RE TRYING TO ACT COOL... HEY...
IS THAT SO...

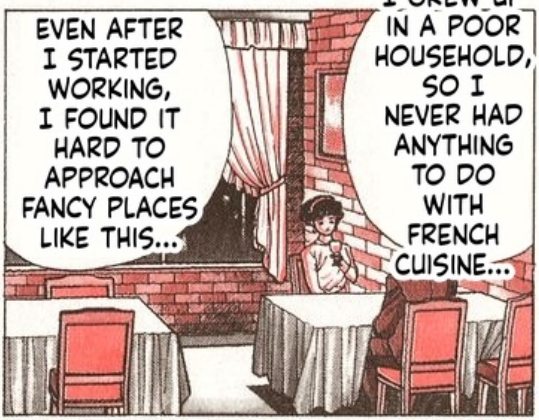
THAT IS THE ULTIMATE WAY TO ENJOY A RESTAURANT.
RELYING ON THE STAFF FOR EVERYTHING.

12





AH, THAT WAS DELICIOUS.
I HAD A GREAT TIME, IT WAS THE BEST.
THAT WAS A MAGNIFICENT MEAL.
BUT KIRIKO-SAN, DID YOU ACTUALLY ENJOY YOURSELF?
EH?
THE FOOD AND THE WINE WERE TRULY WONDERFUL.
13
W-WHY?!
HEY, HIRAKAWA...
I DIDN'T ENJOY IT FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART...
I FELT UNCOMFORTABLE THE ENTIRE TIME...


EVEN AFTER I STARTED WORKING, I FOUND IT HARD TO APPROACH FANCY PLACES LIKE THIS...
I GREW UP IN A POOR HOUSEHOLD, SO I NEVER HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH FRENCH CUISINE...

TO BE HONEST, KIRIKO-SAN, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER BEEN TO A FRENCH RESTAURANT.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT. MR. HIRAKAWA ONLY DID IT BECAUSE HE WAS SO DESPERATE TO MAKE SURE YOU HAD A GOOD TIME...

IT'S BECAUSE I... I JUST WANTED TO LOOK COOL IN FRONT OF YOU...
THAT'S WHY I BEGGED YAMAOKA AND KURITA-SAN TO HELP ME OUT TODAY.

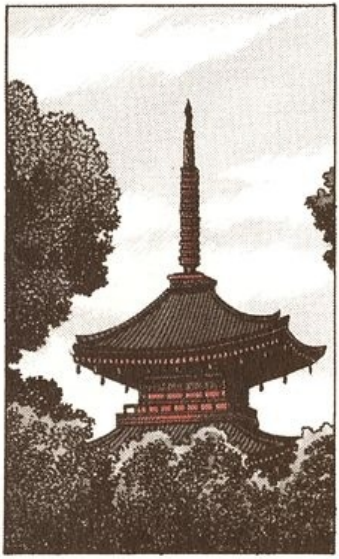
NO, IT'S NOT OKAY!

14

I ONLY FAKED WHO I WAS BECAUSE I WANTED YOU TO LIKE ME SO BADLY!
THE TRUTH IS, I'M JUST A POOR KID FROM THE STICKS, BUT I TRIED TO ACT LIKE SOME WEALTHY, SOPHISTICATED, AND STYLISH CITY BOY.

OKAY, BUT THEN WHAT DO YOU PLAN ON DOING NOW?
I GET HOW YOU FEEL.
.....
HIRAKAWA, YOU JUST NEED TO TREAT KIRIKO TO A MEAL ONE MORE TIME.
WHEN I LIE TO MYSELF LIKE THIS, I START TO LOSE ALL MY CONFIDENCE...
WHAT ON EARTH SHOULD I DO...
15
HEH, KURITA, YOU'RE UP TO SOMETHING, AREN'T YOU?
HUH? ONE MORE TIME...?

ガード下 酒場
やき鳥
ラーメン専
ラー専門メン



SO THE TREAT YOU MENTIONED TODAY IS... RAMEN?

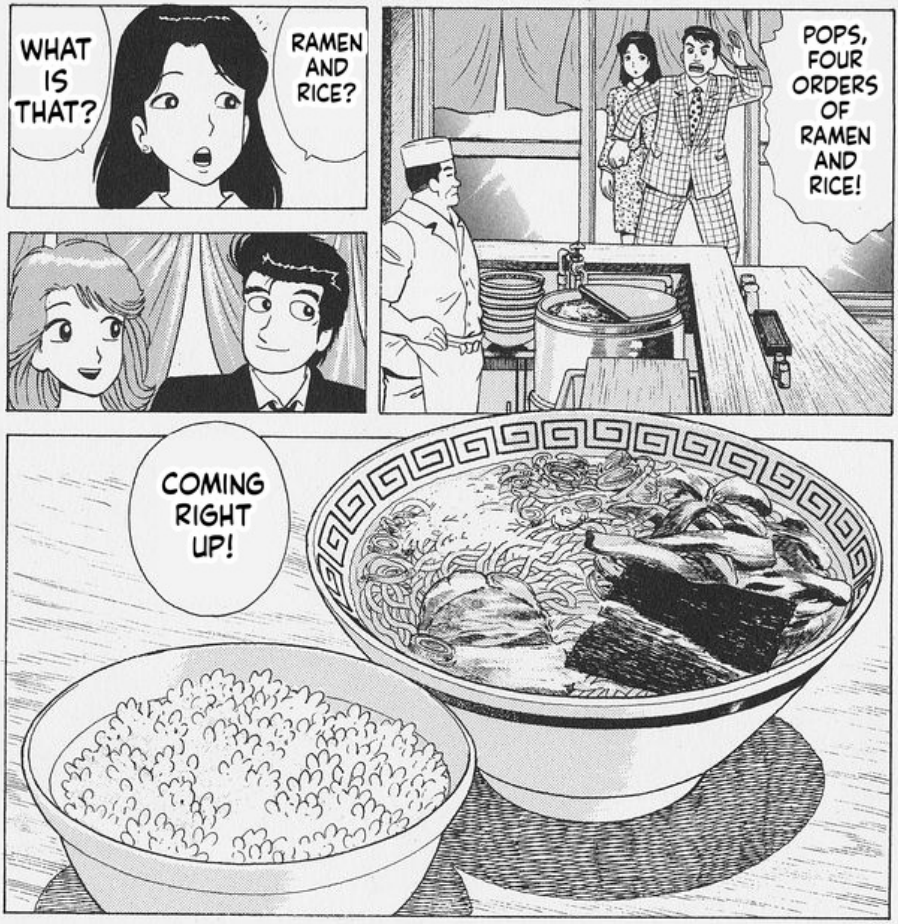
THIS IS THE PLACE.
HNNNNGH...

16

NOW, I'M GOING TO SHOW YOU MY TRUE SELF!
KIRIKO-SAN, PLEASE COME THIS WAY.
ガッ
OH, OKAY...

IT'S NOT JUST RAMEN.

ギィ


WHAT IS THAT?
RAMEN AND RICE?
POPS, FOUR ORDERS OF RAMEN AND RICE!
COMING RIGHT UP!

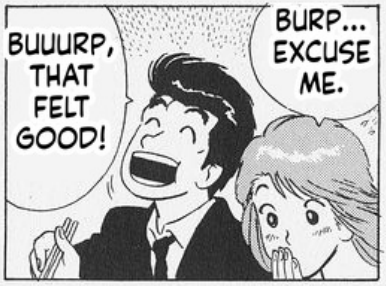
17

LET'S EAT.
EVERYONE, PLEASE DO EXACTLY AS I DO.
AND THAT IS WHY EATING RAMEN WITH RICE IS SO DIFFICULT.
STUNNED SILENCE

ズゥー
FIRST, TAKE A SIP OF THE RAMEN BROTH.
BASIC FORM: BROTH-NOODLE-RICE-BROTH, BEGIN!
パーン
RAMEN-RICE EATING METHOD NUMBER ONE!
TAKE A HUGE, HEARTY MOUTHFUL OF RICE!
WHILE KEEPING THE NOODLES IN YOUR MOUTH.
ズルルル…
NEXT, TAKE A SLURP OF NOODLES.
IT'S SURPRISINGLY DIFFICULT TO STUFF YOUR MOUTH WITH RICE WHILE YOU'VE STILL GOT NOODLES IN THERE...
18
BUT THIS, THIS IS REALLY SOMETHING!
ズ
CHEW IT ALL UP RAVENOUSLY, GULP IT DOWN, AND WITHOUT A MOMENT'S DELAY, TAKE A BIG SWIG OF THE BROTH.
THIS IS THE TRUE ESSENCE OF RAMEN-RICE!
MASTICATING THE NOODLES AND RICE TOGETHER.

A SIP OF THE BROTH.
BROTH-SEAWEED-RICE-NOODLE-BROTH!
RAMEN-RICE EATING METHOD NUMBER TWO!
AH~, IT ALMOST GOT STUCK IN MY THROAT.
SAVORING THE RICHNESS OF THIS TRIPLE-THREAT FLAVOR-!
SEAWEED, NOODLES, AND RICE!
AT THE SAME TIME, SLURP THE NOODLES.
WRAP IT IN THE RICE AND PUT IT IN YOUR MOUTH.
QUICKLY SCOOPING UP THE SEAWEED ON TOP OF THE RAMEN,
GULP IT ALL DOWN IN ONE GO!
AND THEN, A BIG GULP OF THE BROTH.
EATING THE RICE WITH BAMBOO SHOOTS AS A SIDE DISH!
RAMEN-RICE EATING METHOD NUMBER THREE: BAMBOO-RICE-NOODLE-BROTH!
19
UUU -! THIS FEELS AMAZING!
ゲップ
AFTER ENJOYING THE TEXTURE FOR THREE OR FOUR BITES, I SLURP THE NOODLES.

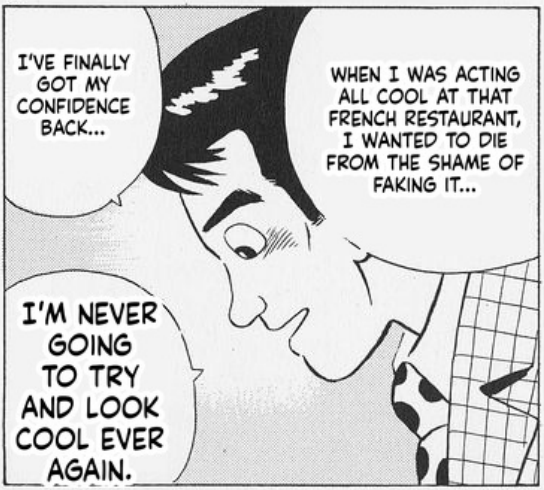
IN SHORT: GOBBLE IT, SLURP IT, AND SCARF IT DOWN!
THE ULTIMATE RAMEN-RICE TECHNIQUE: CHAOTIC SOUP, CHAOTIC NOODLES, CHAOTIC RICE, CHAOTIC SOUP —!
ANYWAY, JUST DO IT!


BUUURP, THAT FELT GOOD!
BURP... EXCUSE ME.

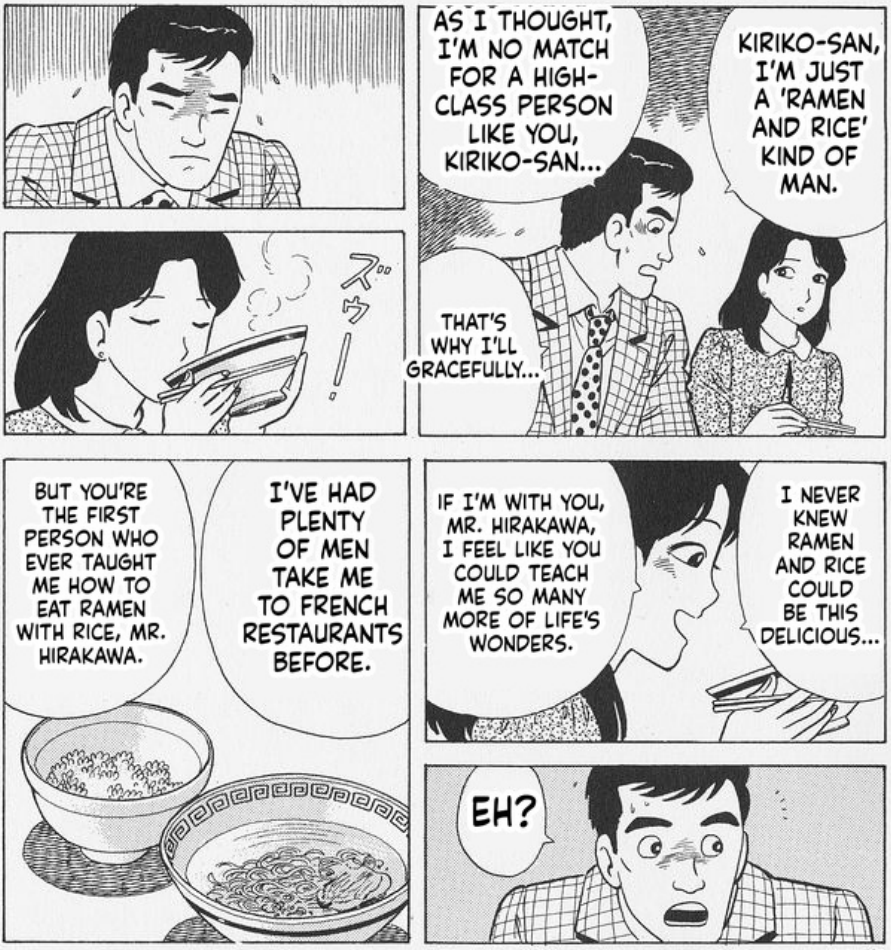
BURP, OH HOW EMBARRASSING.

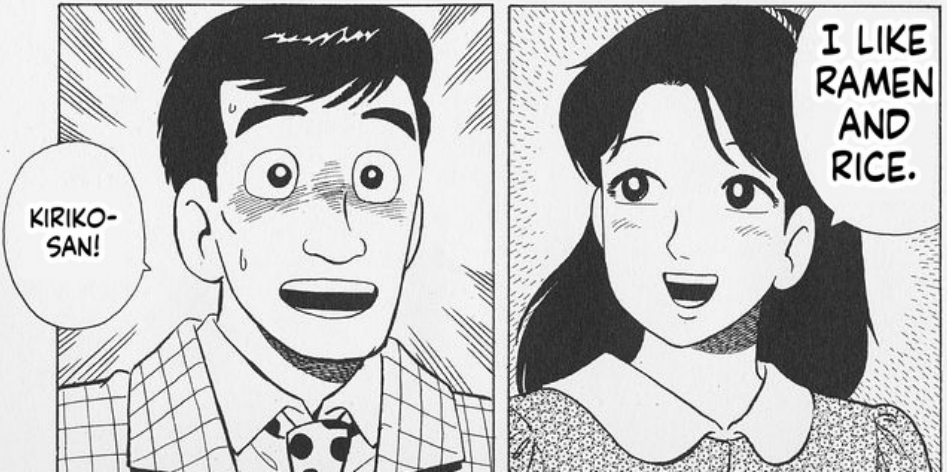
I CAN'T KEEP UP AT ALL!
YOU'RE FINISHED ALREADY?!

THANK YOU FOR THE MEAL.


I'VE FINALLY GOT MY CONFIDENCE BACK...
WHEN I WAS ACTING ALL COOL AT THAT FRENCH RESTAURANT, I WANTED TO DIE FROM THE SHAME OF FAKING IT...
I'M NEVER GOING TO TRY AND LOOK COOL EVER AGAIN.

KIRIKO-SAN, I'M SORRY FOR DRAGGING YOU INTO THIS.
BUT THIS IS WHO I REALLY AM.


AS I THOUGHT, I'M NO MATCH FOR A HIGH-CLASS PERSON LIKE YOU, KIRIKO-SAN...
KIRIKO-SAN, I'M JUST A 'RAMEN AND RICE' KIND OF MAN.
THAT'S WHY I'LL GRACEFULLY...
ズゥー!
BUT YOU'RE THE FIRST PERSON WHO EVER TAUGHT ME HOW TO EAT RAMEN WITH RICE, MR. HIRAKAWA.
I'VE HAD PLENTY OF MEN TAKE ME TO FRENCH RESTAURANTS BEFORE.
IF I'M WITH YOU, MR. HIRAKAWA, I FEEL LIKE YOU COULD TEACH ME SO MANY MORE OF LIFE'S WONDERS.
I NEVER KNEW RAMEN AND RICE COULD BE THIS DELICIOUS...
EH?


KIRIKO-SAN!
I LIKE RAMEN AND RICE.

ガラ
HEY, YAMAOKA.

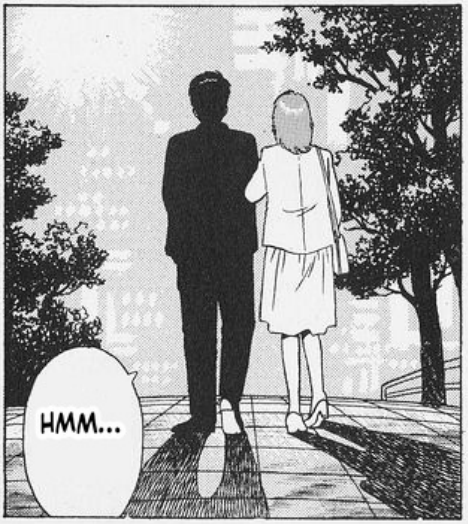
DAMN IT! NOW I'VE GOT HEART-BURN!
AAAAH! THANKS FOR THE FEAST!

KIRIKO-SAN IS A LOVELY PERSON, TOO!
HIRAKAWA IS A GOOD MAN, ISN'T HE?
ラーメン
専
ラー

IT'S FINE, IT'S FINE. SEE YOU LATER.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
KURITA-SAN, THANK YOU SO MUCH.

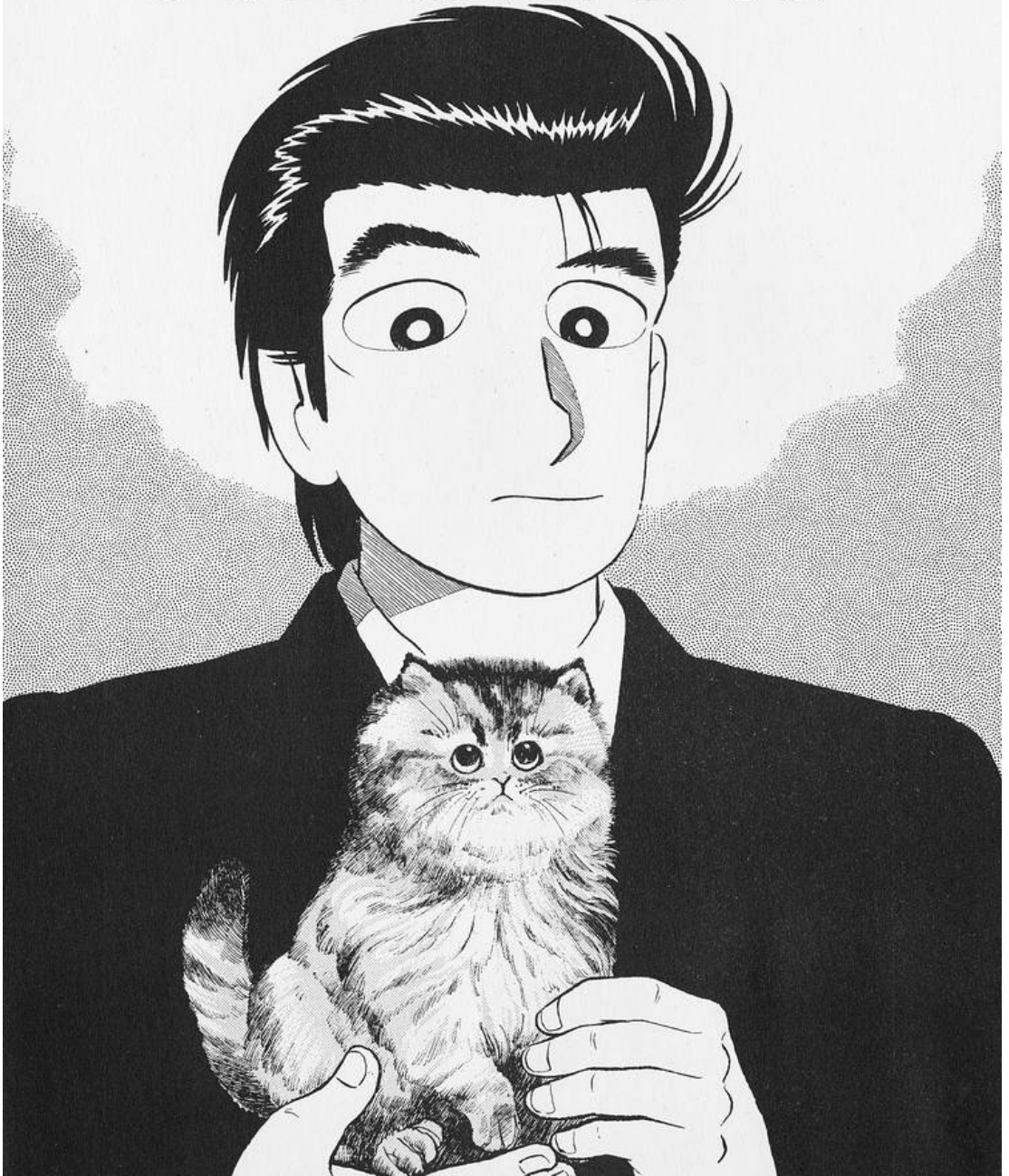
22

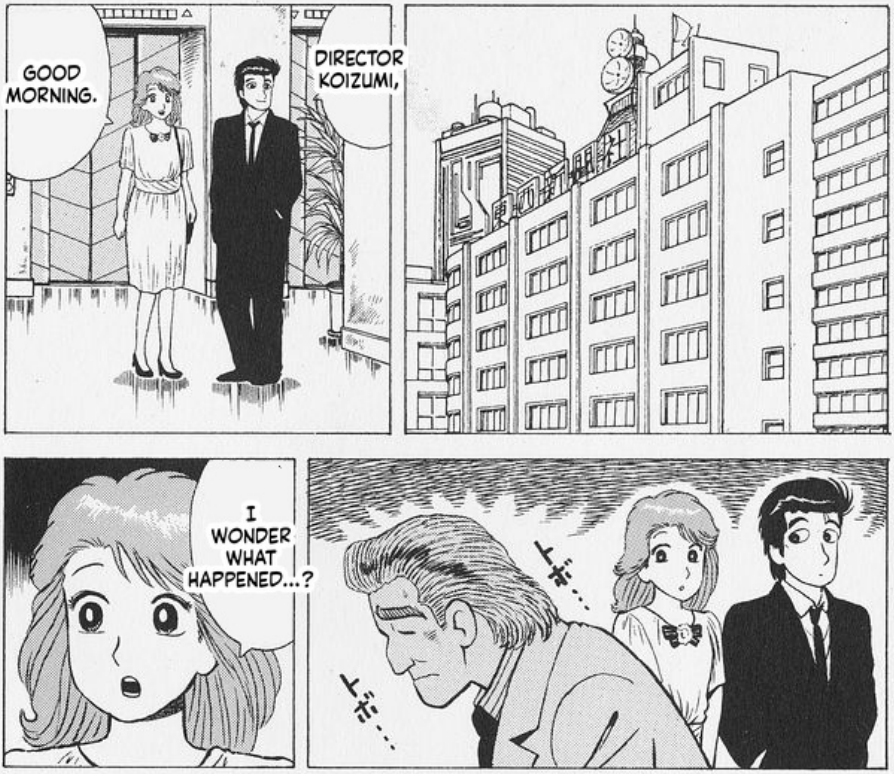

HMM...

SHOULD WE GO SOMEWHERE TO EAT SOMETHING TO CLEAR OUR PALATES?

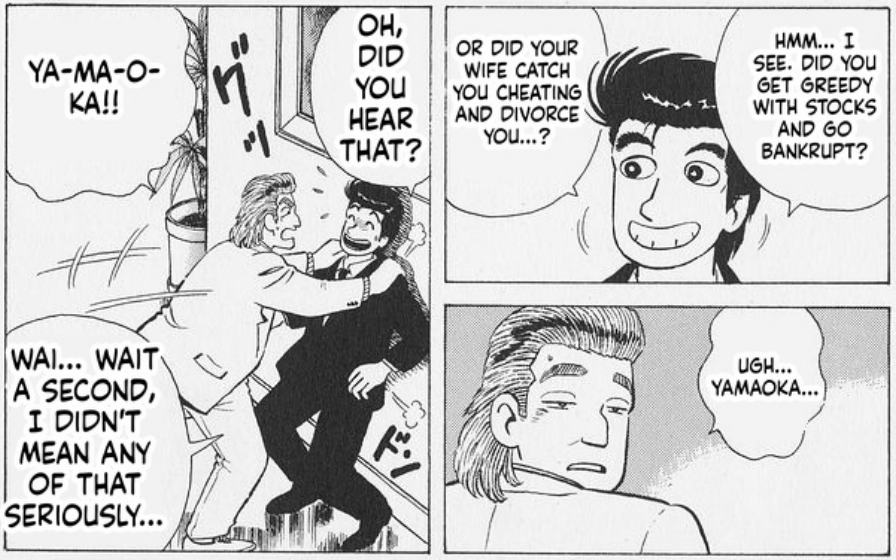
NO, I'M FINE JUST LIKE THIS.

第2話
天日の贈り物



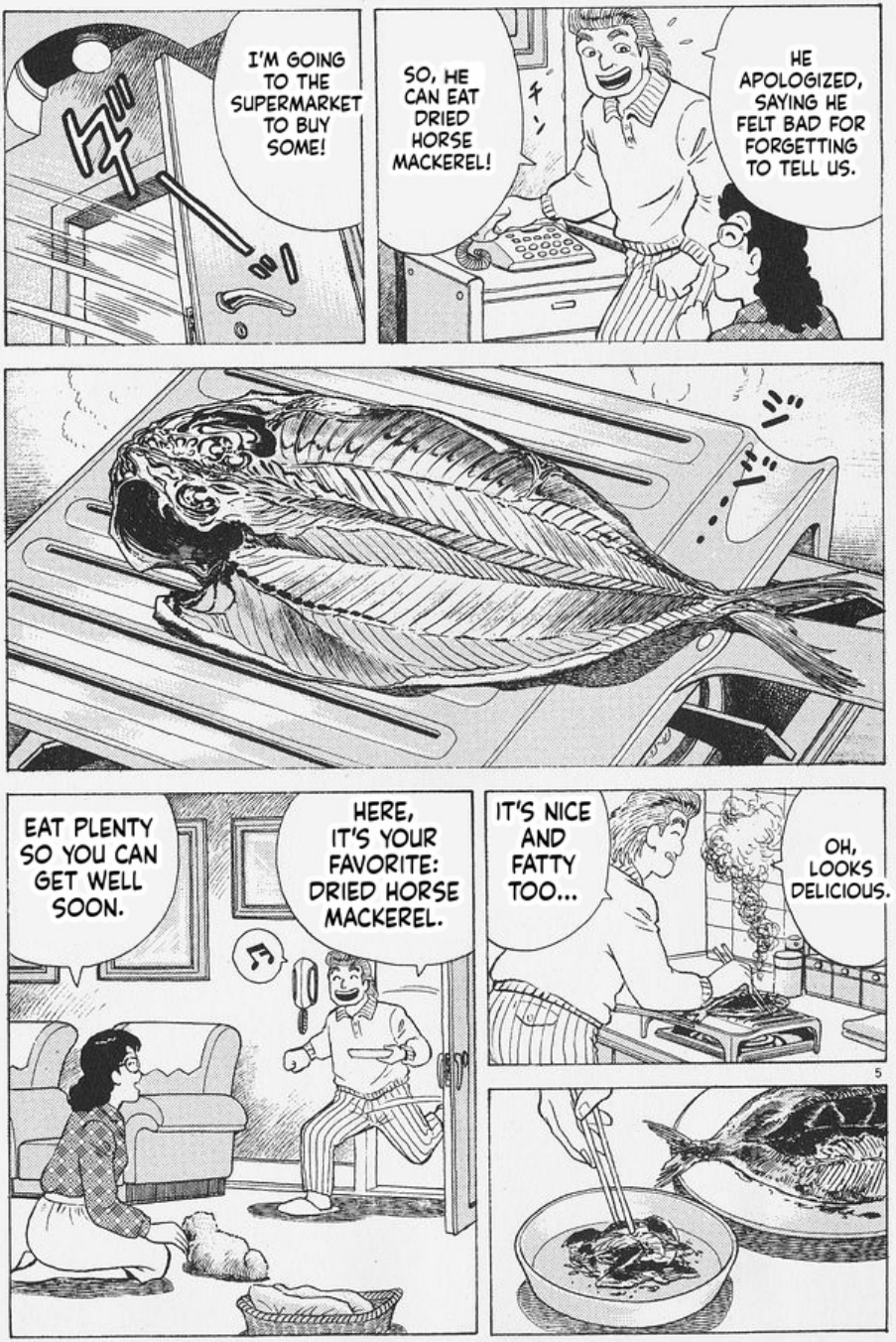

GOOD MORNING.
DIRECTOR KOIZUMI,
I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED...?
トボ...
トボ...

2

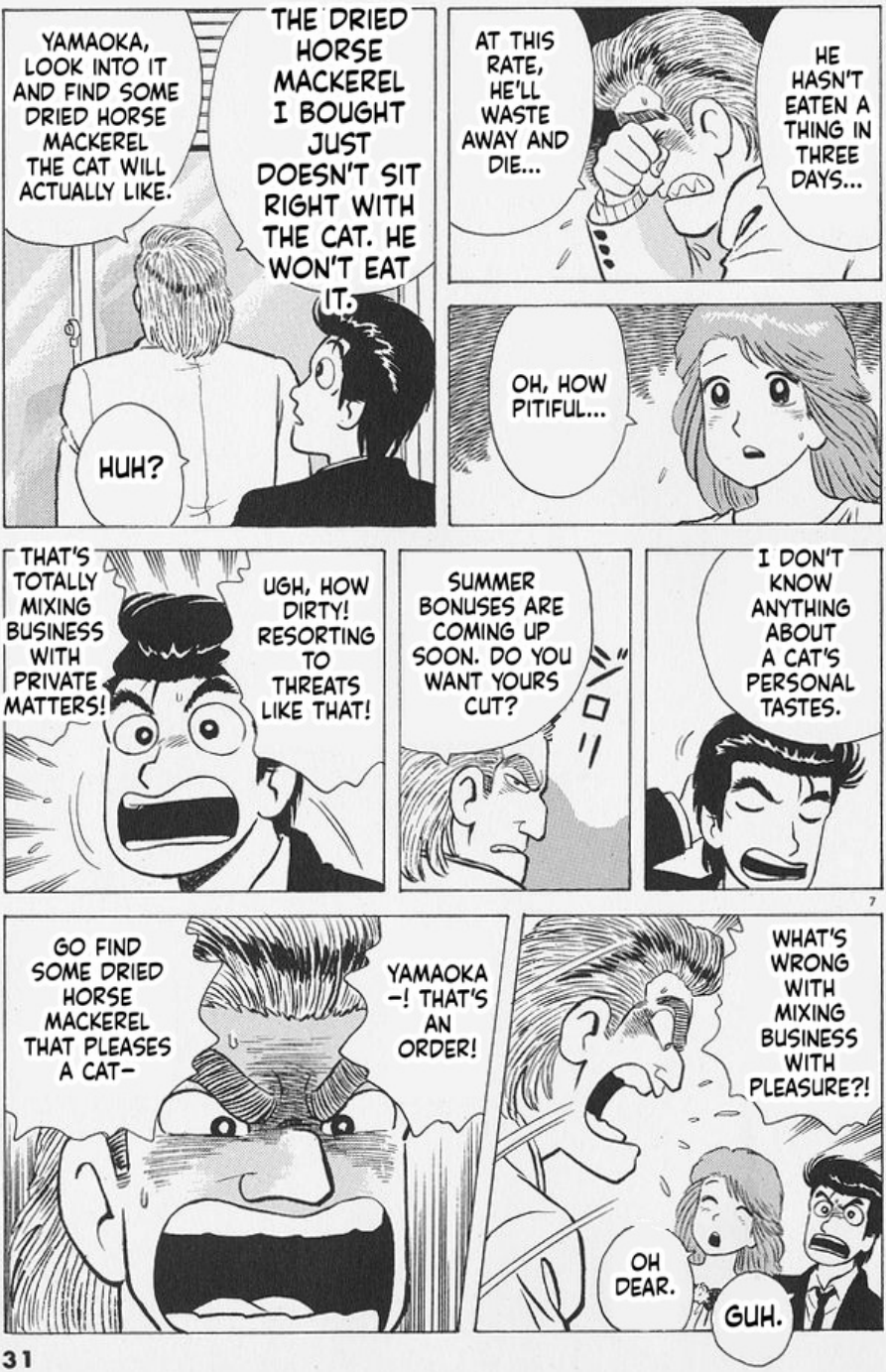

YA-MA-O-KA!!
ガバ
OH, DID YOU HEAR THAT?
WAI... WAIT A SECOND, I DIDN'T MEAN ANY OF THAT SERIOUSLY...
ドド
OR DID YOUR WIFE CATCH YOU CHEATING AND DIVORCE YOU...?
HMM... I SEE. DID YOU GET GREEDY WITH STOCKS AND GO BANKRUPT?
UGH... YAMAOKA...

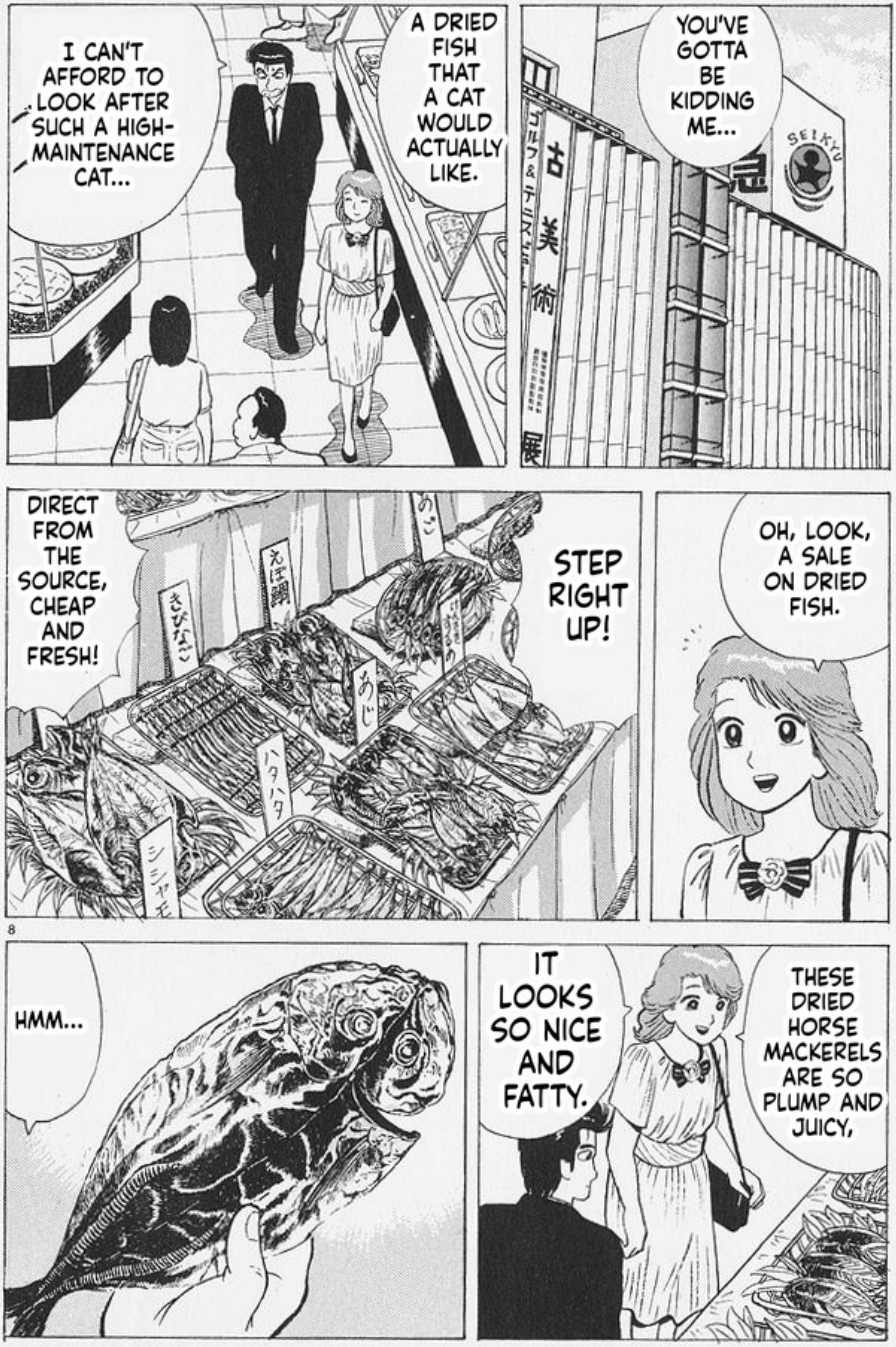
SAVE MY CAT!!!!
I-I SAID I WAS SORRY, SO PLEASE...
YAMAOKA~~!
I WAS JUST JOKING!
HIEEE– FORGIVE ME!
編集局長室
A CAT?
HUH?
3
IT'S A CAT WITH AN INCREDIBLE PEDIGREE; THE FATHER IS A JAPANESE CHAMPION.
IT'S A PERSIAN, AND THE MOTHER IS AN AMERICAN CHAMPION.
ニマ~~
WHOA, IT'S HIGHER CLASS THAN ITS OWNER.
ACTUALLY, I'VE ACQUIRED A NEW CAT.
YOU KNOW HOW MUCH I LOVE CATS.

AND THAT PRECIOUS CAT...
どれっ
HE'S FALLEN ILL...!
IT SEEMED LIKE INDIGESTION OR SOMETHING, AND THE VET'S TREATMENT HELPED, BUT...
AFTER THAT, HE LOST HIS APPETITE COMPLETELY...
I'VE TRIED EVERYTHING, BUT HE WON'T EAT A THING...
CAT FOOD, RICE WITH BONITO FLAKES, BOILED FISH, MILK, CHEESE, CHICKEN BREAST...
4
SO, I CALLED THE ORIGINAL OWNER WHO GAVE ME THE KITTEN...
EH?! DRIED HORSE MACKEREL?!
IS DRIED HORSE MACKEREL THIS KITTY'S FAVORITE?!
YOU SAVED US, THANK YOU SO MUCH!


I'M GOING TO THE SUPERMARKET TO BUY SOME!
SO, HE CAN EAT DRIED HORSE MACKEREL!
チン
HE APOLOGIZED, SAYING HE FELT BAD FOR FORGETTING TO TELL US.
ジ
EAT PLENTY SO YOU CAN GET WELL SOON.
HERE, IT'S YOUR FAVORITE: DRIED HORSE MACKEREL.
IT'S NICE AND FATTY TOO...
OH, LOOKS DELICIOUS.
5

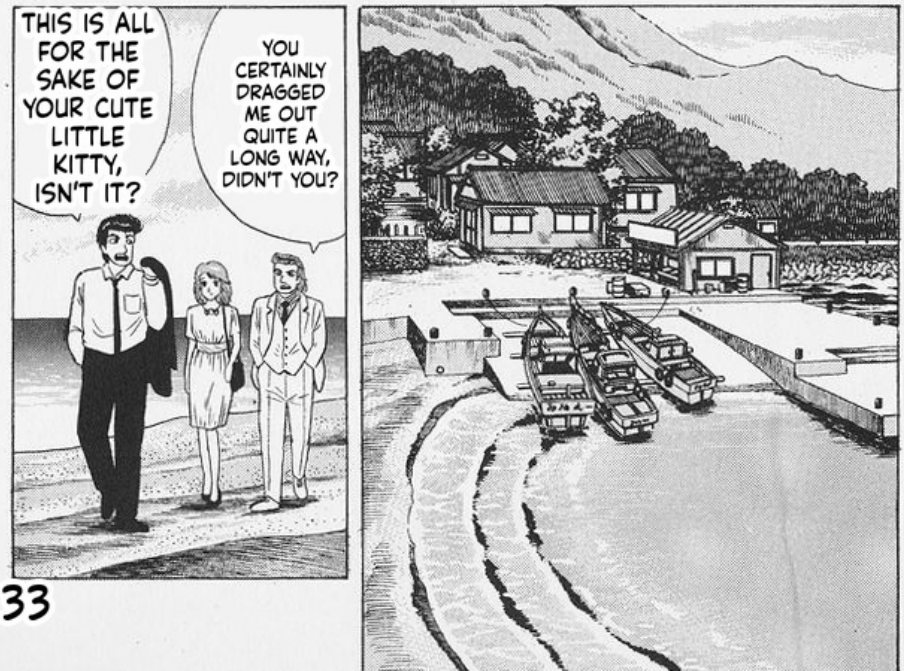
ぐぐぐ
IT'S MACKEREL! DRIED HORSE MACKEREL!
HUH? WHAT'S WRONG?
IT'S YOUR FAVORITE, ISN'T IT? WHY WON'T YOU EAT IT?!
プイ
6
HE STILL WON'T EAT IT...
I THOUGHT MAYBE HE JUST DIDN'T LIKE THAT SPECIFIC DRIED HORSE MACKEREL, SO I WENT TO THE LOCAL FISHMONGER AND BOUGHT A DIFFERENT ONE,

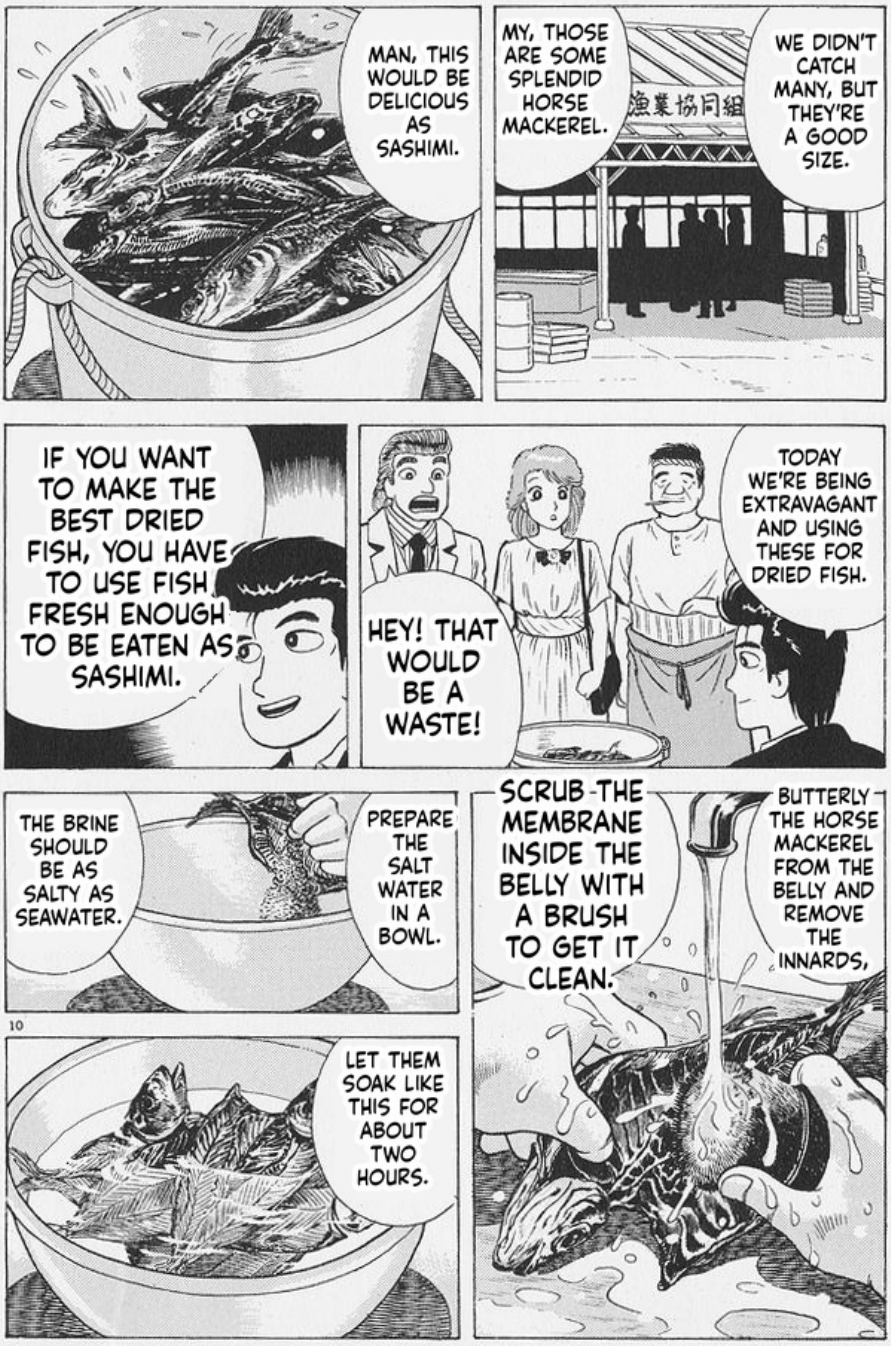

YAMAOKA, LOOK INTO IT AND FIND SOME DRIED HORSE MACKEREL THE CAT WILL ACTUALLY LIKE.
THE DRIED HORSE MACKEREL I BOUGHT JUST DOESN'T SIT RIGHT WITH THE CAT. HE WON'T EAT IT.
HUH?
AT THIS RATE, HE'LL WASTE AWAY AND DIE...
HE HASN'T EATEN A THING IN THREE DAYS...
OH, HOW PITIFUL...
THAT'S TOTALLY MIXING BUSINESS WITH PRIVATE MATTERS!
UGH, HOW DIRTY! RESORTING TO THREATS LIKE THAT!
SUMMER BONUSES ARE COMING UP SOON. DO YOU WANT YOURS CUT?
I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT A CAT'S PERSONAL TASTES.
7
GO FIND SOME DRIED HORSE MACKEREL THAT PLEASES A CAT—
YAMAOKA—! THAT'S AN ORDER!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH MIXING BUSINESS WITH PLEASURE?!
OH DEAR.
GUH.

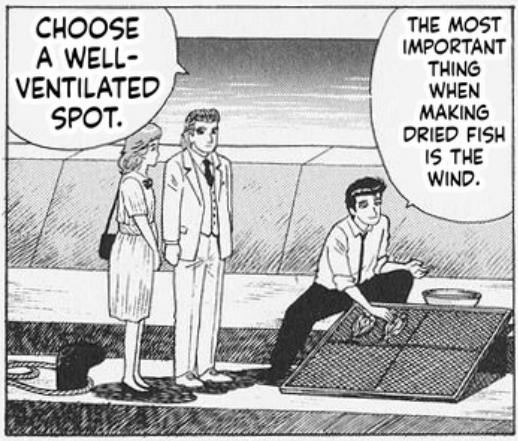

I CAN'T AFFORD TO LOOK AFTER SUCH A HIGH-MAINTENANCE CAT...
A DRIED FISH THAT A CAT WOULD ACTUALLY LIKE.
YOU'VE GOTTA BE KIDDING ME...
SEIKYU
古美術
DIRECT FROM THE SOURCE, CHEAP AND FRESH!
STEP RIGHT UP!
OH, LOOK, A SALE ON DRIED FISH.
8
HMM...
IT LOOKS SO NICE AND FATTY.
THESE DRIED HORSE MACKERELS ARE SO PLUMP AND JUICY,

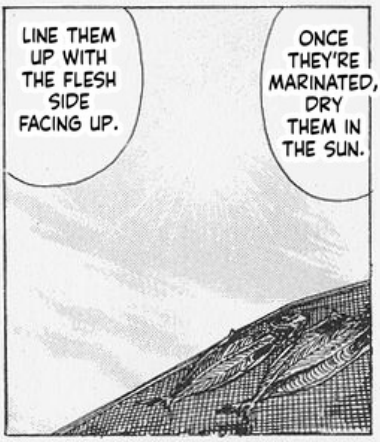
WHAT'S WRONG?!
AH! I SEE!
:-)
IT JUST MEANS YOU'RE EVEN LOWER THAN A CAT.
HUMANS ARE...

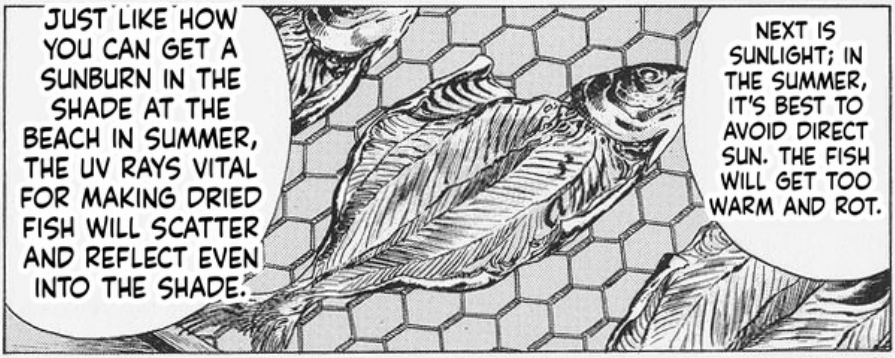
9


THIS IS ALL FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR CUTE LITTLE KITTY, ISN'T IT?
YOU CERTAINLY DRAGGED ME OUT QUITE A LONG WAY, DIDN'T YOU?


MAN, THIS WOULD BE DELICIOUS AS SASHIMI.
MY, THOSE ARE SOME SPLENDID HORSE MACKEREL.
漁業協同組
WE DIDN'T CATCH MANY, BUT THEY'RE A GOOD SIZE.
IF YOU WANT TO MAKE THE BEST DRIED FISH, YOU HAVE TO USE FISH FRESH ENOUGH TO BE EATEN AS SASHIMI.
HEY! THAT WOULD BE A WASTE!
TODAY WE'RE BEING EXTRAVAGANT AND USING THESE FOR DRIED FISH.
THE BRINE SHOULD BE AS SALTY AS SEAWATER.
PREPARE THE SALT WATER IN A BOWL.
10
LET THEM SOAK LIKE THIS FOR ABOUT TWO HOURS.
SCRUB THE MEMBRANE INSIDE THE BELLY WITH A BRUSH TO GET IT CLEAN.
BUTTERLY THE HORSE MACKEREL FROM THE BELLY AND REMOVE THE INNARDS,

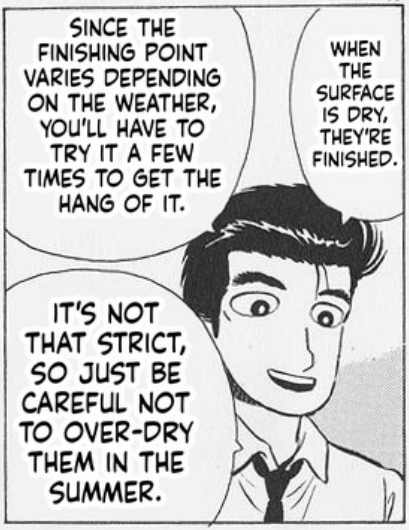

CHOOSE A WELL-VENTILATED SPOT.
THE MOST IMPORTANT THING WHEN MAKING DRIED FISH IS THE WIND.


LINE THEM UP WITH THE FLESH SIDE FACING UP.
ONCE THEY'RE MARINATED, DRY THEM IN THE SUN.


JUST LIKE HOW YOU CAN GET A SUNBURN IN THE SHADE AT THE BEACH IN SUMMER, THE UV RAYS VITAL FOR MAKING DRIED FISH WILL SCATTER AND REFLECT EVEN INTO THE SHADE.
NEXT IS SUNLIGHT; IN THE SUMMER, IT'S BEST TO AVOID DIRECT SUN. THE FISH WILL GET TOO WARM AND ROT.

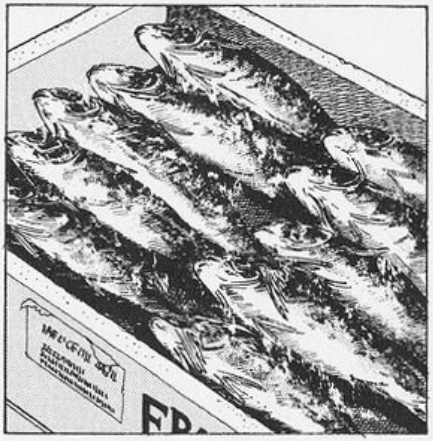
11

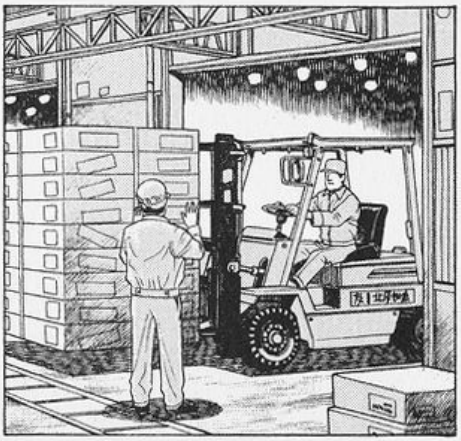
I SEE.
IF YOU'RE DRYING THEM AT HOME, USING AN ALUMINUM WINDOW SCREEN IS QUITE CONVENIENT.

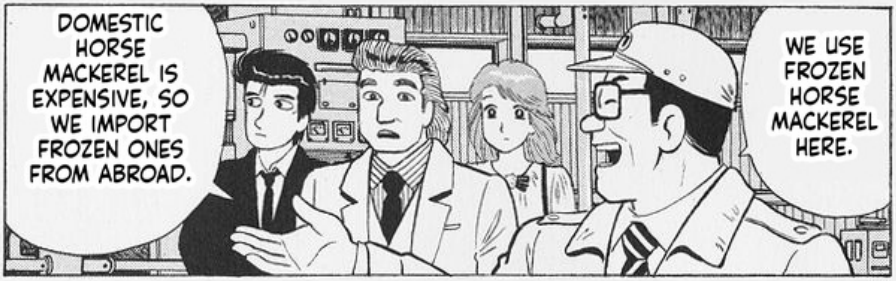

SINCE THE FINISHING POINT VARIES DEPENDING ON THE WEATHER, YOU'LL HAVE TO TRY IT A FEW TIMES TO GET THE HANG OF IT.
WHEN THE SURFACE IS DRY, THEY'RE FINISHED.
IT'S NOT THAT STRICT, SO JUST BE CAREFUL NOT TO OVER-DRY THEM IN THE SUMMER.

IN THAT CASE, ANY HOUSEHOLD CAN DO IT.

THERE'S ANOTHER WAY TO MAKE DRIED FISH?
EH?
NOW THEN... LET ME SHOW THE DIRECTOR ANOTHER WAY TO MAKE DRIED FISH.
ゴー…
FUKUMOTO MARINE PRODUCTS PROCESSING CO., LTD.
福本水産加工
12
WHAT! A DRIED FISH FACTORY?!
IT'S A DRIED FISH FACTORY.
TAXI
WHERE AM I?



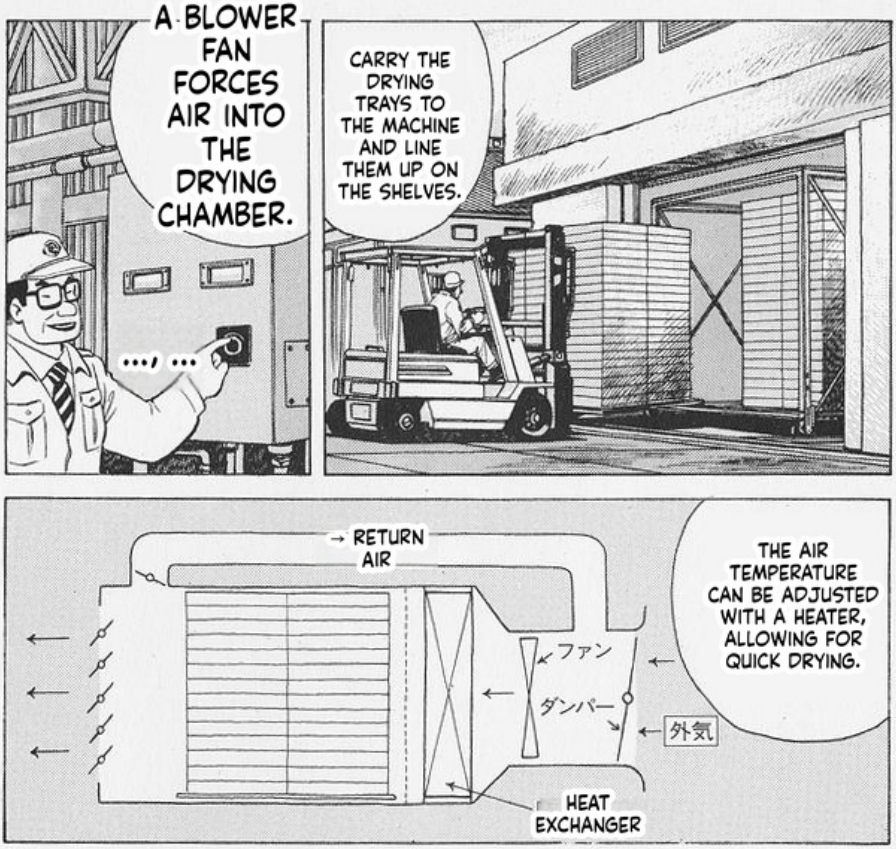



DOMESTIC HORSE MACKEREL IS EXPENSIVE, SO WE IMPORT FROZEN ONES FROM ABROAD.
WE USE FROZEN HORSE MACKEREL HERE.

13

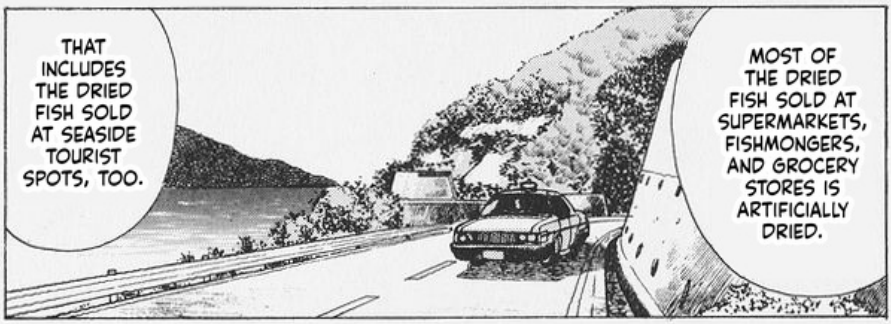
THEY ARE THEN ARRANGED IN DRYING CONTAINERS.
AFTER SOAKING IN THE BRINE FOR ABOUT TWO HOURS...

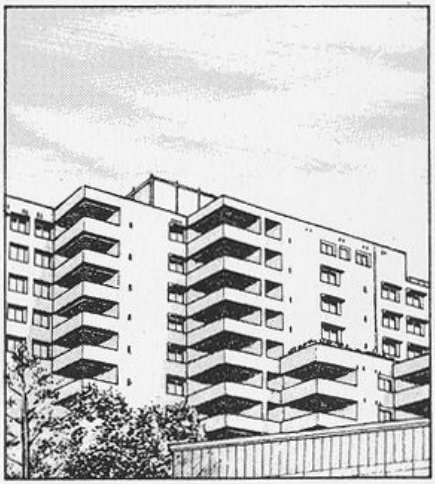
ONCE THAWED, THE FISH ARE BUTTERFLIED AND SOAKED IN BRINE.


A BLOWER FAN FORCES AIR INTO THE DRYING CHAMBER.
CARRY THE DRYING TRAYS TO THE MACHINE AND LINE THEM UP ON THE SHELVES.
→ RETURN AIR
ファン
ダンパー
外気
HEAT EXCHANGER
THE AIR TEMPERATURE CAN BE ADJUSTED WITH A HEATER, ALLOWING FOR QUICK DRYING.

14

ゴオオ
WHOA! SO INSTEAD OF SUN-DRYING THEM, YOU DRY THEM INSIDE A MACHINE?
THIS WAY, YOU CAN MAKE DRIED FISH WITHOUT BEING AT THE MERCY OF THE WEATHER...

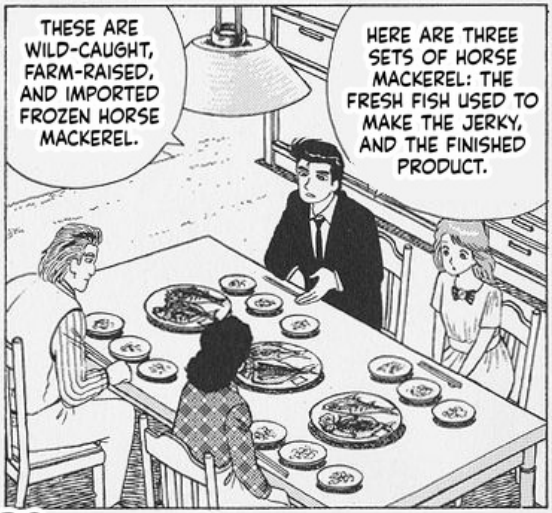

THAT INCLUDES THE DRIED FISH SOLD AT SEASIDE TOURIST SPOTS, TOO.
MOST OF THE DRIED FISH SOLD AT SUPERMARKETS, FISHMONGERS, AND GROCERY STORES IS ARTIFICIALLY DRIED.

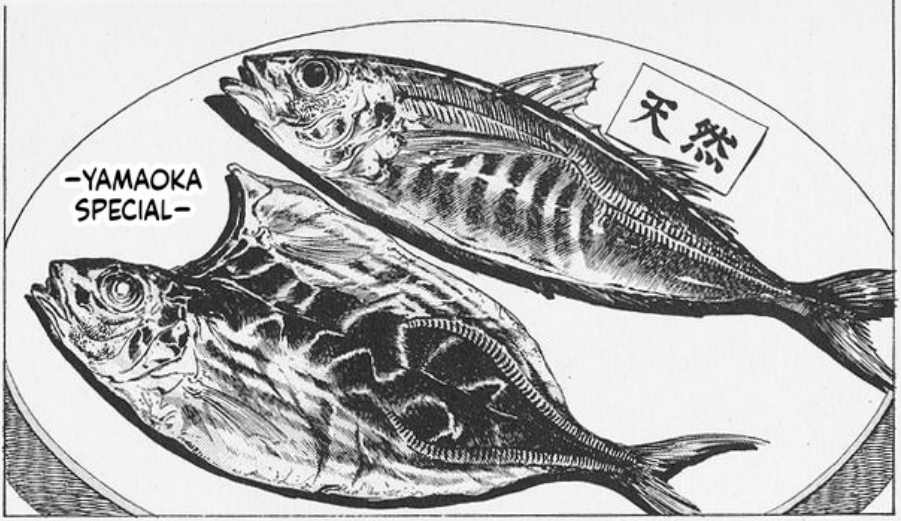


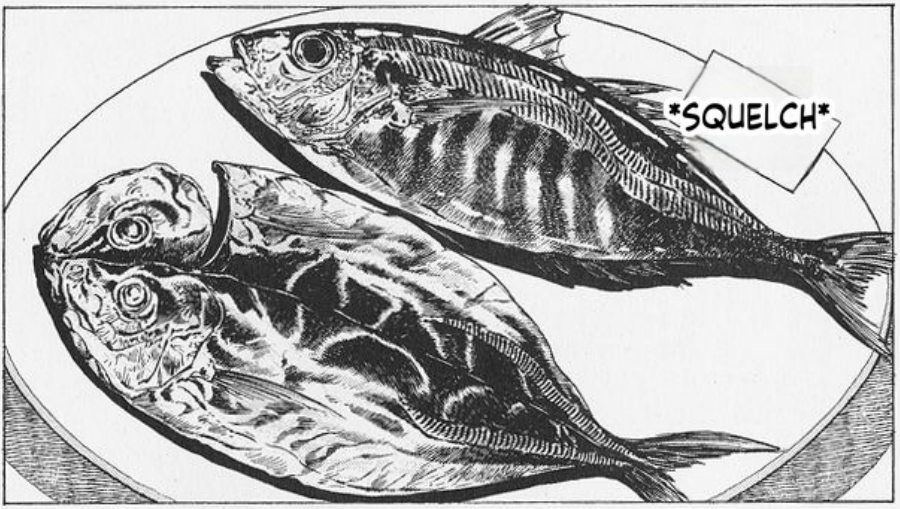
HMM...

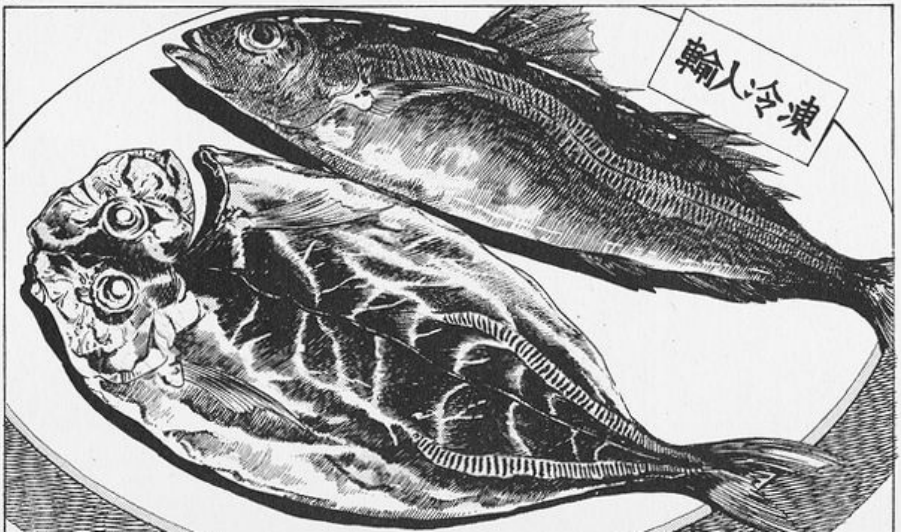
THAT FEELS A BIT SOULLESS...

15


THESE ARE WILD-CAUGHT, FARM-RAISED, AND IMPORTED FROZEN HORSE MACKEREL.
HERE ARE THREE SETS OF HORSE MACKEREL: THE FRESH FISH USED TO MAKE THE JERKY, AND THE FINISHED PRODUCT.


天然
-YAMAOKA SPECIAL-


SQUELCH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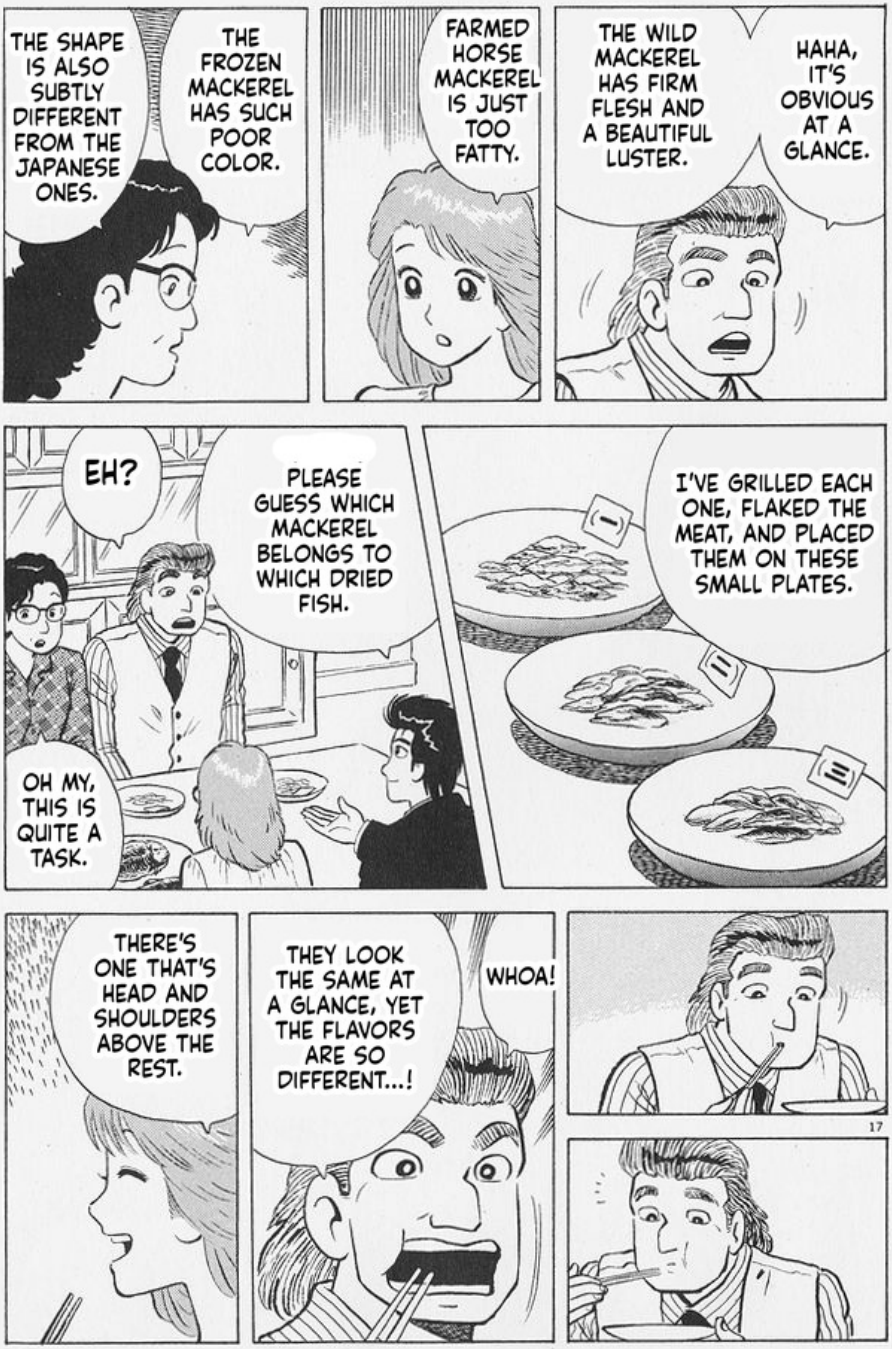
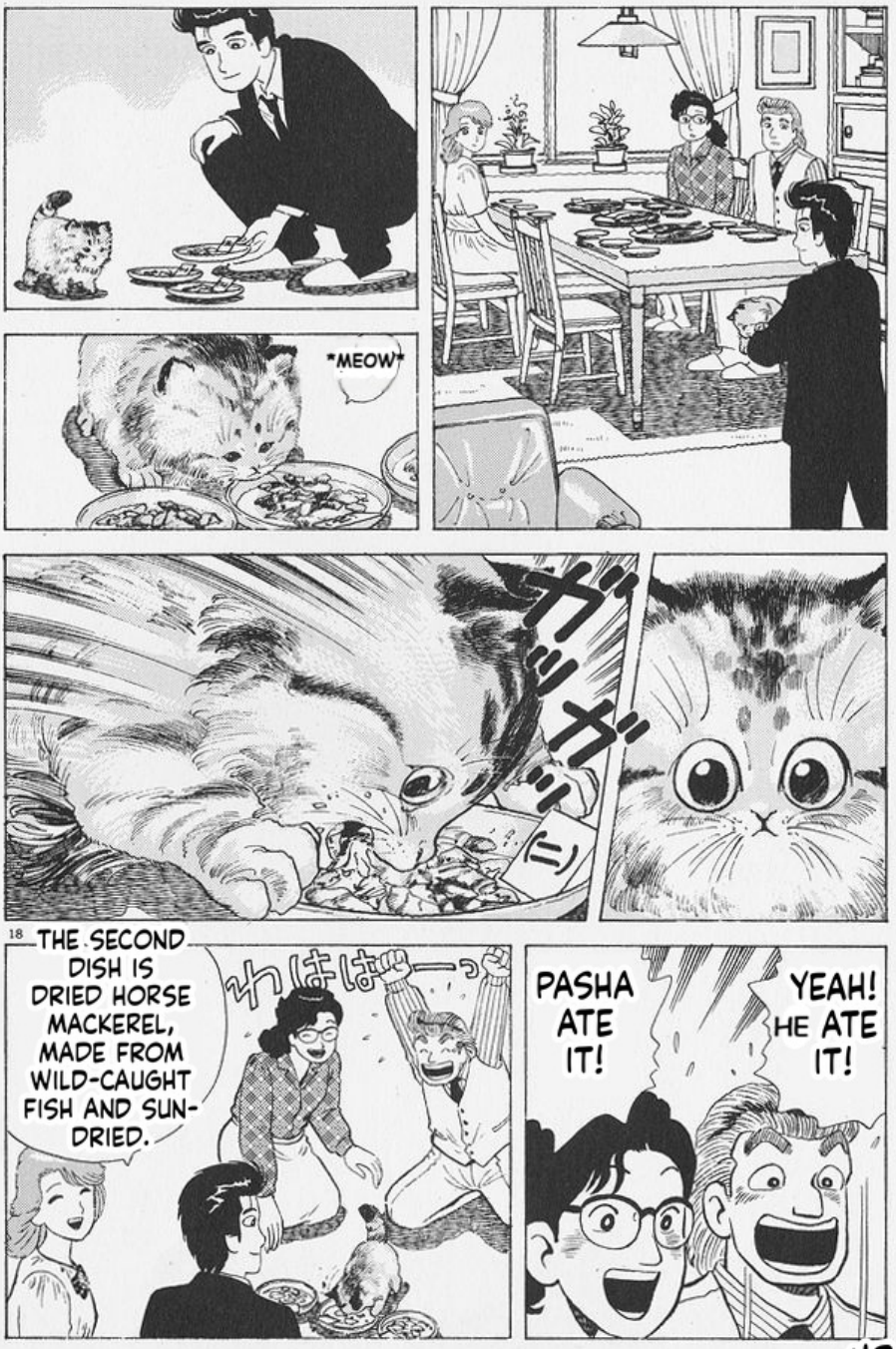
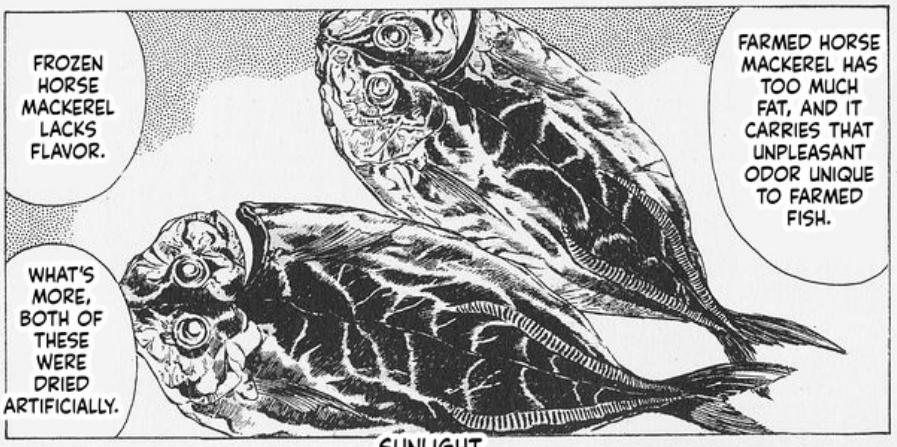
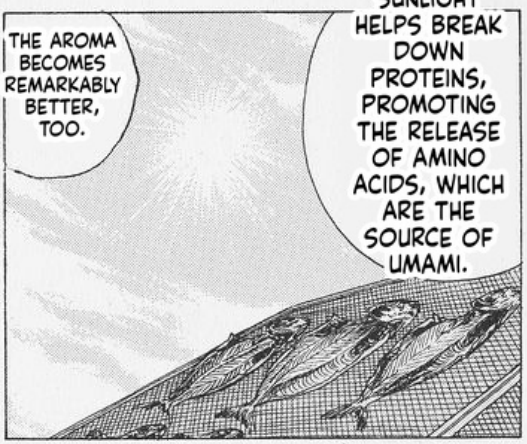

THE SHAPE IS ALSO SUBTLY DIFFERENT FROM THE JAPANESE ONES.
THE FROZEN MACKEREL HAS SUCH POOR COLOR.
FARMED HORSE MACKEREL IS JUST TOO FATTY.
THE WILD MACKEREL HAS FIRM FLESH AND A BEAUTIFUL LUSTER.
HAHA, IT'S OBVIOUS AT A GLANCE.
EH?
PLEASE GUESS WHICH MACKEREL BELONGS TO WHICH DRIED FISH.
OH MY, THIS IS QUITE A TASK.
I'VE GRILLED EACH ONE, FLAKED THE MEAT, AND PLACED THEM ON THESE SMALL PLATES.
I
II
III
THERE'S ONE THAT'S HEAD AND SHOULDERS ABOVE THE REST.
THEY LOOK THE SAME AT A GLANCE, YET THE FLAVORS ARE SO DIFFERENT...!
WHOA!

17


MEOW
ガツガツ
18
THE SECOND DISH IS DRIED HORSE MACKEREL, MADE FROM WILD-CAUGHT FISH AND SUN-DRIED.
わはは〜っ
PASHA ATE IT!
YEAH! HE ATE IT!

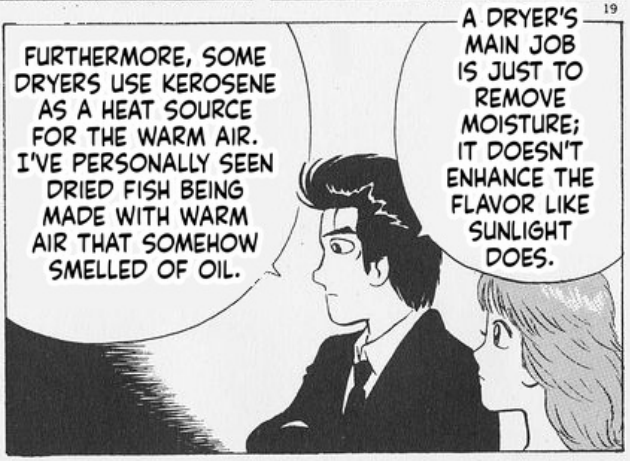

FROZEN HORSE MACKEREL LACKS FLAVOR.
FARMED HORSE MACKEREL HAS TOO MUCH FAT, AND IT CARRIES THAT UNPLEASANT ODOR UNIQUE TO FARMED FISH.
WHAT'S MORE, BOTH OF THESE WERE DRIED ARTIFICIALLY.

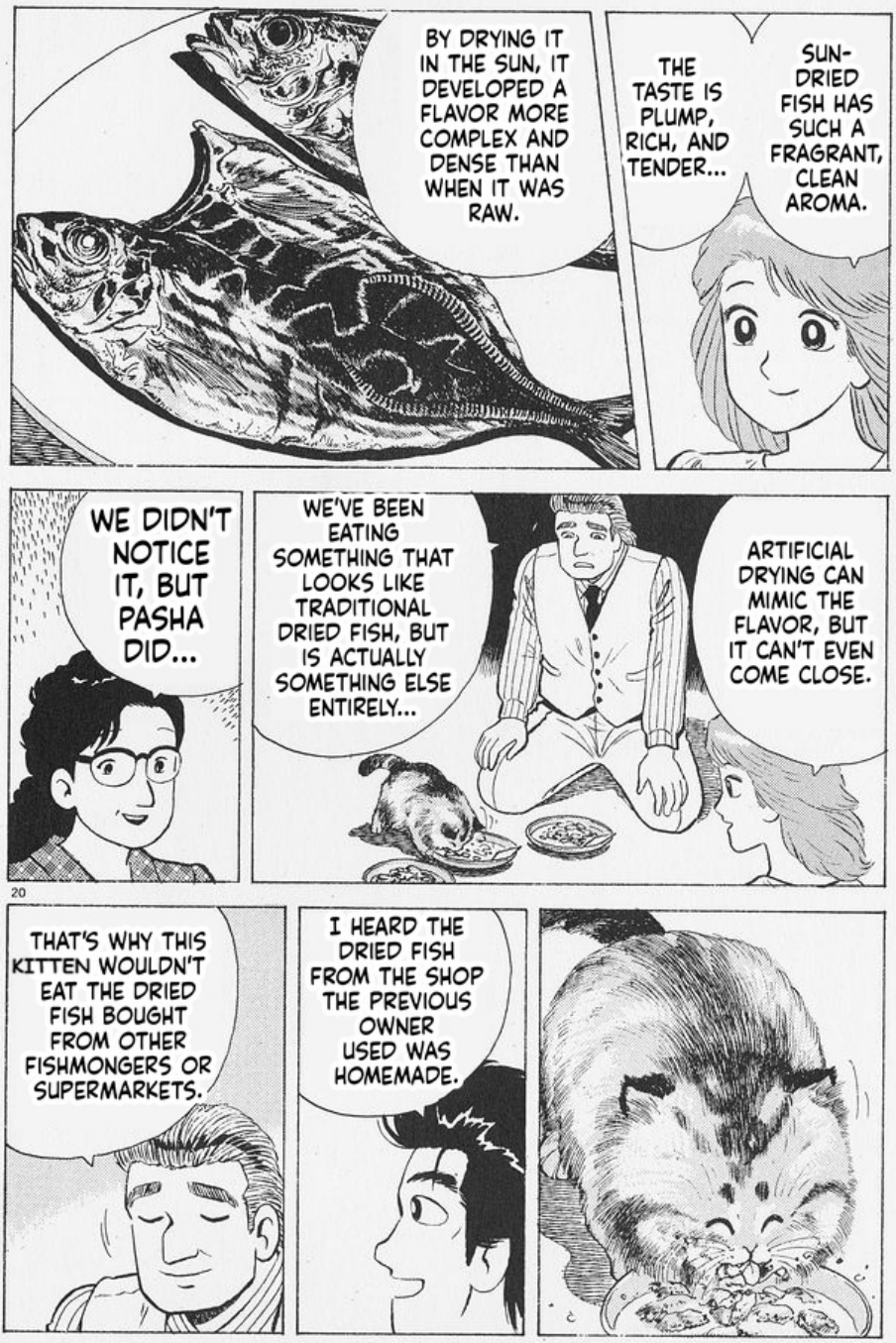

THE AROMA BECOMES REMARKABLY BETTER, TOO.
SUNLIGHT HELPS BREAK DOWN PROTEINS, PROMOTING THE RELEASE OF AMINO ACIDS, WHICH ARE THE SOURCE OF UMAMI.

THERE IS A REAL PURPOSE BEHIND SUN-DRYING.
MAKING DRIED FISH ISN'T JUST ABOUT REMOVING THE WATER.

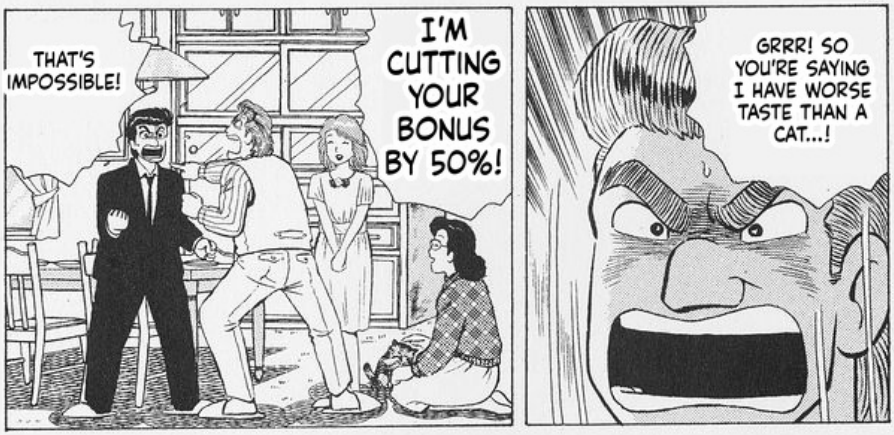
19

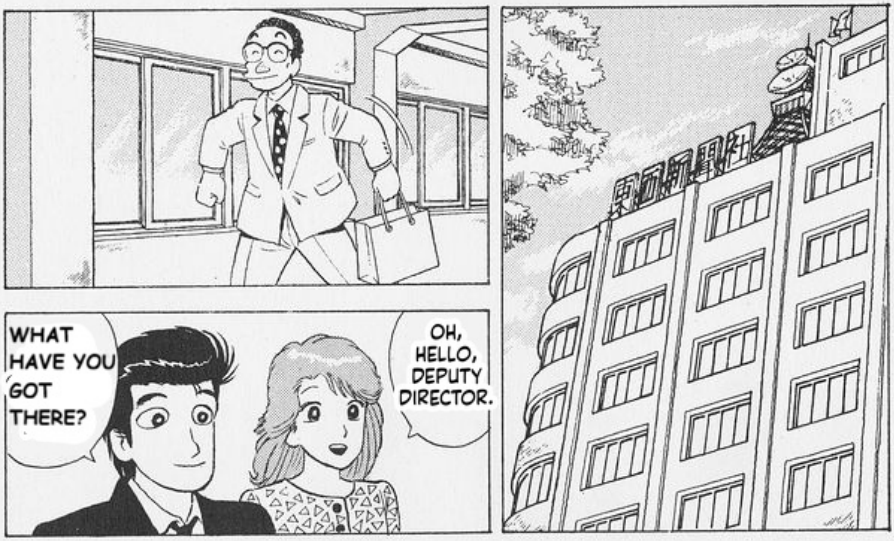
WELL, THAT WOULD LEAVE THE DRIED FISH WITH A NASTY, UNBEARABLE STENCH.

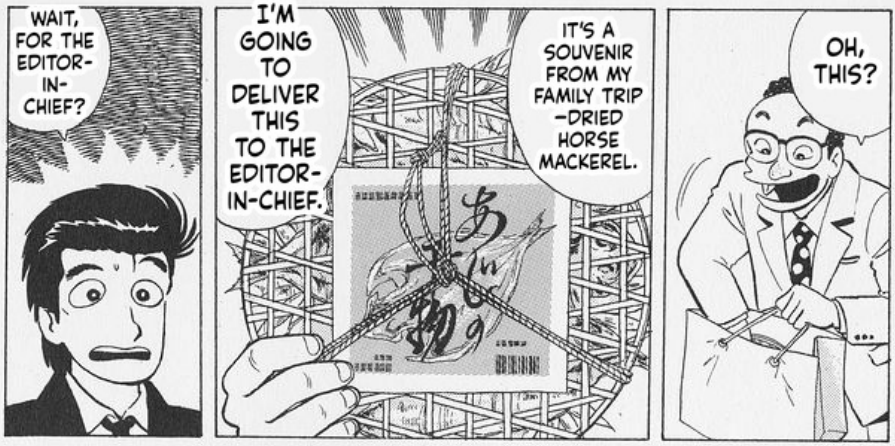

FURTHERMORE, SOME DRYERS USE KEROSENE AS A HEAT SOURCE FOR THE WARM AIR. I'VE PERSONALLY SEEN DRIED FISH BEING MADE WITH WARM AIR THAT SOMEHOW SMELLED OF OIL.
A DRYER'S MAIN JOB IS JUST TO REMOVE MOISTURE; IT DOESN'T ENHANCE THE FLAVOR LIKE SUNLIGHT DOES.


BY DRYING IT IN THE SUN, IT DEVELOPED A FLAVOR MORE COMPLEX AND DENSE THAN WHEN IT WAS RAW.
SUN-DRIED FISH HAS SUCH A FRAGRANT, CLEAN AROMA.
THE TASTE IS PLUMP, RICH, AND TENDER...
WE DIDN'T NOTICE IT, BUT PASHA DID...
WE'VE BEEN EATING SOMETHING THAT LOOKS LIKE TRADITIONAL DRIED FISH, BUT IS ACTUALLY SOMETHING ELSE ENTIRELY...
ARTIFICIAL DRYING CAN MIMIC THE FLAVOR, BUT IT CAN'T EVEN COME CLOSE.
20
THAT'S WHY THIS KITTEN WOULDN'T EAT THE DRIED FISH BOUGHT FROM OTHER FISHMONGERS OR SUPERMARKETS.
I HEARD THE DRIED FISH FROM THE SHOP THE PREVIOUS OWNER USED WAS HOMEMADE.

HEHEHE, CAN YOU TELL?
IT SEEMS YOU HAVE SOMETHING YOU WANT TO SAY TO ME...
YOU ATE IT ALL WHILE SAYING 'DELICIOUS, DELICIOUS' WITHOUT EVEN NOTICING, DIDN'T YOU, DIRECTOR?
21


THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
I'M CUTTING YOUR BONUS BY 50%!
GRRR! SO YOU'RE SAYING I HAVE WORSE TASTE THAN A CAT...!


WHAT HAVE YOU GOT THERE?
OH, HELLO, DEPUTY DIRECTOR.


WAIT, FOR THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF?
I'M GOING TO DELIVER THIS TO THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF.
IT'S A SOUVENIR FROM MY FAMILY TRIP —DRIED HORSE MACKEREL.
OH, THIS?
...

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF~~!!
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF'S OFFICE
WITH THIS, I'LL BE IN THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF'S GOOD GRACES MORE THAN EVER.
THE SECRET TO A SALARYMAN'S SUCCESS IS BROWN-NOSING. NOBODY HATES RECEIVING A GIFT, AFTER ALL.
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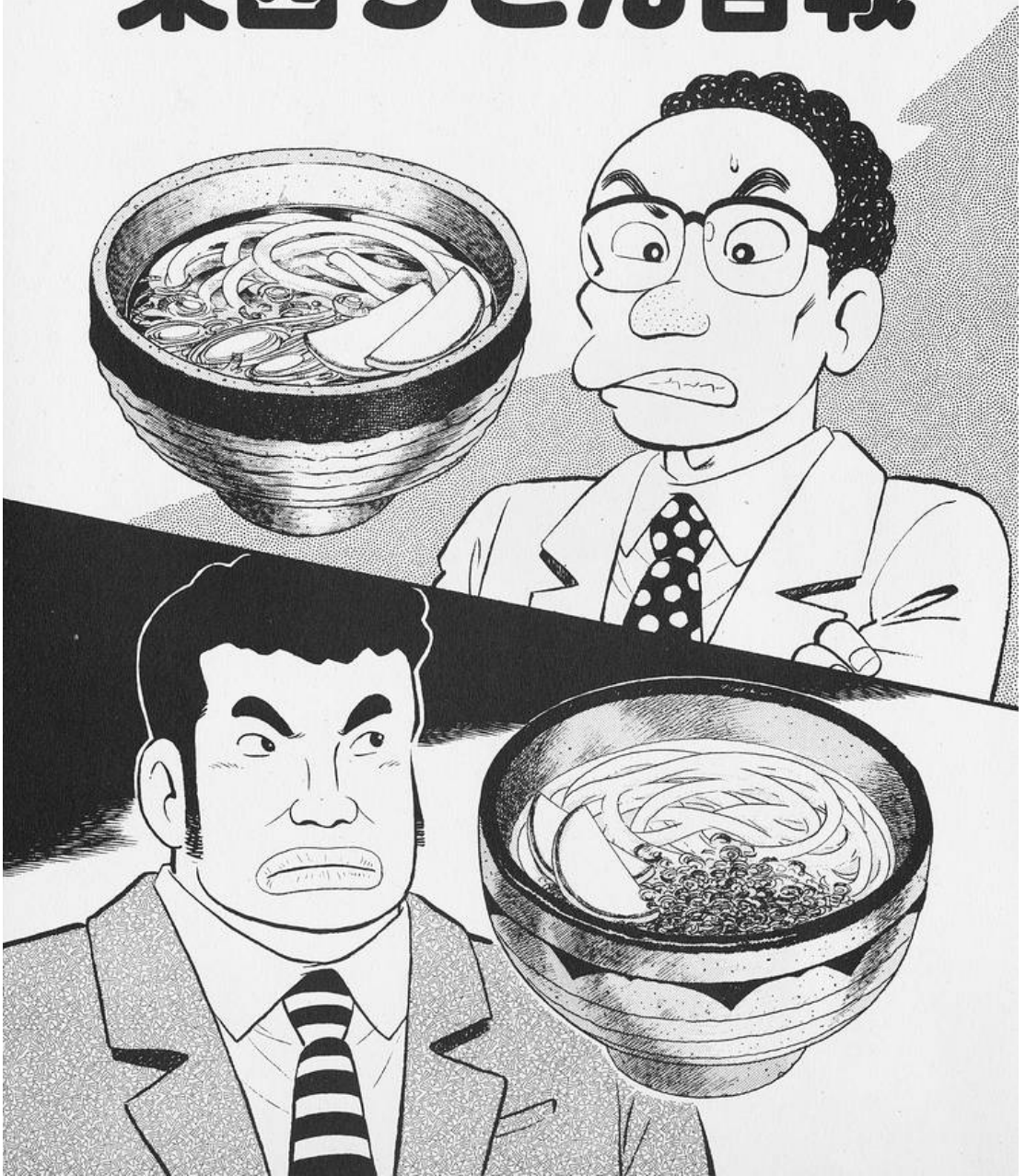
22

WHY... WHY IS THIS HAPPENING? WHAT DID I DO WRONG?!
SO, YOU THINK MY TASTE IS WORSE THAN A CAT TOO, TOMII?!
YOU BASTARD! YAMAOKA EGGED YOU ON TO COME HERE AND MAKE A FOOL OF ME, DIDN'T HE?!
編集局長室

第3話
東西うどん合戦



I'M SO IMPRESSIVE FOR EVEN SHOWING UP TO WORK TODAY...
UNDAUNTED BY THE AGONY OF THIS HANGOVER,
UGH... I FEEL... SICK...
WHAT THE HELL?!
I SHOULD GET AN AWARD.
IT'S BECAUSE OF PEOPLE LIKE YOU THAT FOLKS FROM KANSAI LOOK DOWN ON US!
YOU DIM-WITTED, GOOD-FOR-NOTHING WASTE OF SPACE!
WH... WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT...?

ACTUALLY, YESTERDAY THE DEPUTY EDITOR...
THERE'S A REASON FOR THIS.
YAMAOKA-SAN, ARE YOU OKAY?

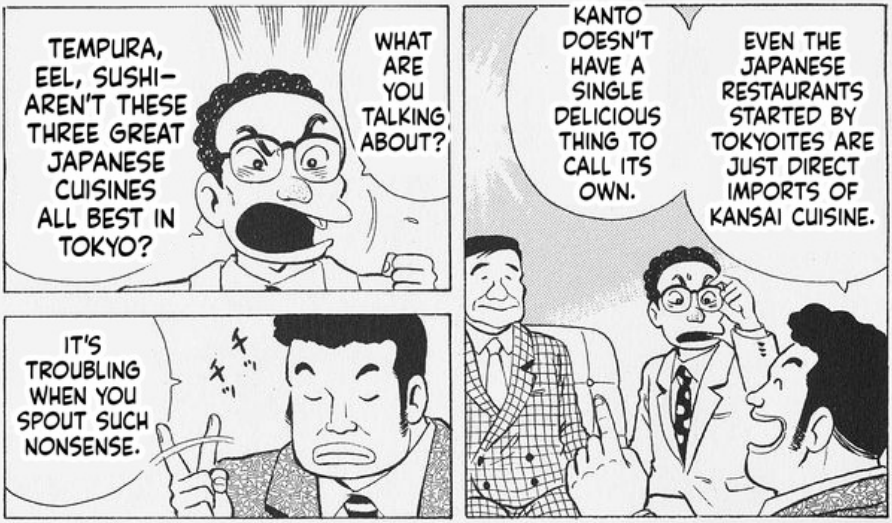
MR. TSUTSUI, WHAT ARE YOUR IMPRESSIONS OF TOKYO?
MR. TSUTSUI FROM THE OSAKA BRANCH TRANSFERRED IN AS THE DEPUTY EDITOR OF THE CITY NEWS DEPARTMENT, AND AT HIS WELCOME PARTY...
3

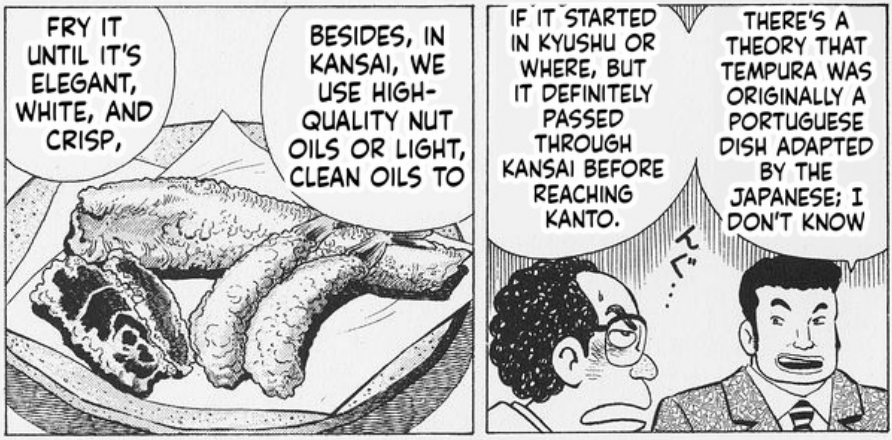
THE FOOD IS BAD?

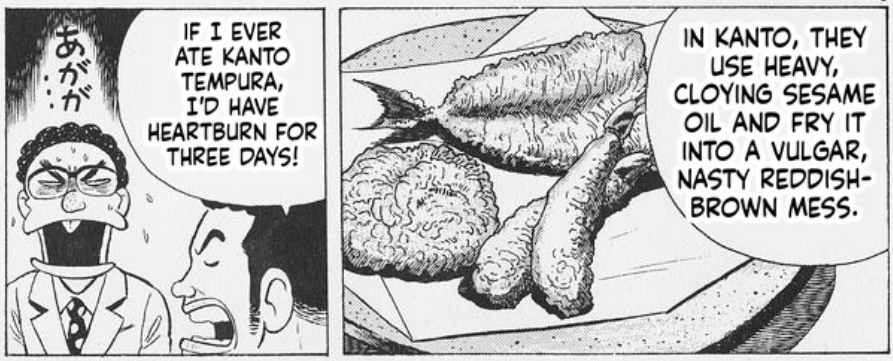
DON'T YOU THINK THE PALATES OF PEOPLE FROM KANTO ARE A BIT OFF?
THAT'S RIGHT.

BOY, TOKYO IS AN EVEN WORSE PLACE FOR FOOD THAN THE RUMORS LED ME TO BELIEVE.
HAHAHA, YOU MEAN IN TOKYO?!

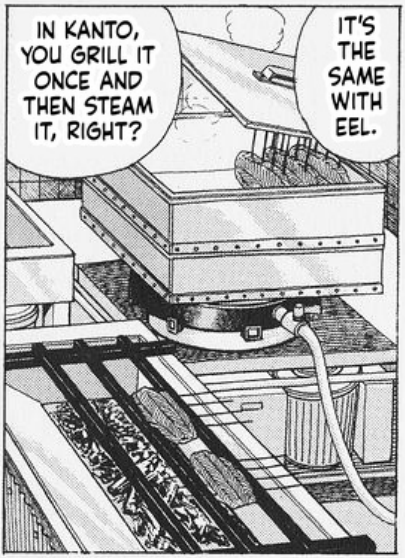
I HAVEN'T COME ACROSS A SINGLE PLACE THAT SERVES FOOD ACTUALLY WORTH THE PRICE THEY CHARGE.
EXPENSIVE, TASTELESS, AND THE PORTIONS ARE TINY.
THE VAST MAJORITY OF THOSE PLACES ARE NO GOOD AT ALL.
FOR INSTANCE, TAKE THE PLACES AROUND THE OFFICE DURING LUNCHTIME.
NOW, HAHA... THAT'S A BIT HARSH.
HMPH.
THERE ARE PLENTY OF HIGH-QUALITY, EXCELLENT RESTAURANTS AROUND, YOU KNOW.
WELL, BUT IT'S A BIT MUCH TO SAY ALL FOOD IN TOKYO IS TERRIBLE BASED ONLY ON THOSE KINDS OF MASS-MARKET RESTAURANTS.
MM...
4
うーん...
EVEN WHEN YOU TALK ABOUT HIGH-END TOKYO SHOPS, ALL THE BEST TRADITIONAL RESTAURANTS ARE JUST BRANCHES OF KANSAI ESTABLISHMENTS.


TEMPURA, EEL, SUSHI— AREN'T THESE THREE GREAT JAPANESE CUISINES ALL BEST IN TOKYO?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
IT'S TROUBLING WHEN YOU SPOUT SUCH NONSENSE.
KANTO DOESN'T HAVE A SINGLE DELICIOUS THING TO CALL ITS OWN.
EVEN THE JAPANESE RESTAURANTS STARTED BY TOKYOITES ARE JUST DIRECT IMPORTS OF KANSAI CUISINE.


FRY IT UNTIL IT'S ELEGANT, WHITE, AND CRISP,
BESIDES, IN KANSAI, WE USE HIGH-QUALITY NUT OILS OR LIGHT, CLEAN OILS TO
IF IT STARTED IN KYUSHU OR WHERE, BUT IT DEFINITELY PASSED THROUGH KANSAI BEFORE REACHING KANTO.
THERE'S A THEORY THAT TEMPURA WAS ORIGINALLY A PORTUGUESE DISH ADAPTED BY THE JAPANESE; I DON'T KNOW
5


あがが…
IF I EVER ATE KANTO TEMPURA, I'D HAVE HEARTBURN FOR THREE DAYS!
IN KANTO, THEY USE HEAVY, CLOYING SESAME OIL AND FRY IT INTO A VULGAR, NASTY REDDISH-BROWN MESS.

YOU'RE JUST USING STEAMING TO COVER UP THE POOR QUALITY.
THAT'S BECAUSE THE QUALITY OF THE EEL ITSELF IS WORSE IN KANTO, AND THEY DON'T HAVE THE SKILL TO COOK IT PROPERLY.

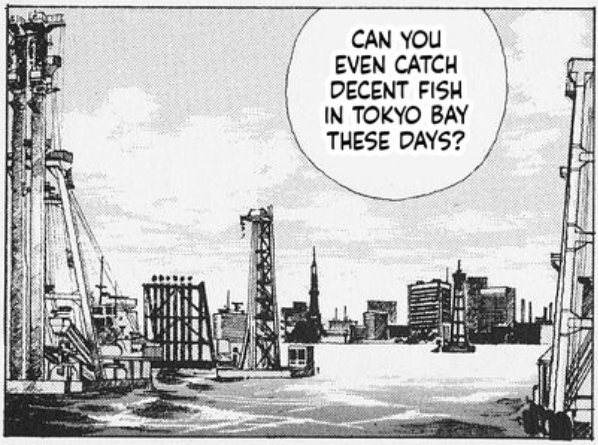

IN KANTO, YOU GRILL IT ONCE AND THEN STEAM IT, RIGHT?
IT'S THE SAME WITH EEL.

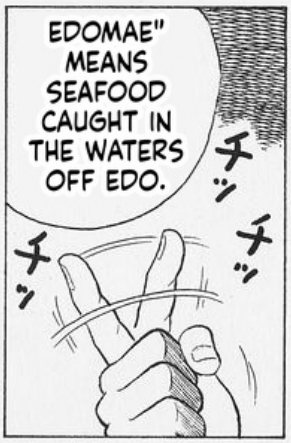
THAT'S SUCH BULLSHIT!

BUT WHEN IT COMES TO SUSHI, TOKYO IS THE ORIGIN OF THE EDOMAE STYLE.

KANSAI EEL SHOPS GRILL THEM SKILLFULLY WITHOUT STEAMING THEM AT ALL.
うぅぅ
IF YOU STEAM AN EEL, YOU'LL LOSE ALL THE FLAVOR.

6


CAN YOU EVEN CATCH DECENT FISH IN TOKYO BAY THESE DAYS?


EDOMAE" MEANS SEAFOOD CAUGHT IN THE WATERS OFF EDO.
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EVERYONE'S USING FISH BROUGHT IN FROM FAR AWAY. CALLING IT 'EDOMAE' IS A TOTAL SHAM!
んが…
IN THAT REGARD, KANSAI HAS THE SETO INLAND SEA RIGHT IN FRONT OF IT, AND FISH CAN BE BROUGHT IN FROM THE SEA OF JAPAN IN JUST A FEW HOURS.
NOWADAYS, KANSAI SUSHI SHOPS ARE THE ONES THAT ARE DELICIOUS AND CHEAP.
ぐぎ
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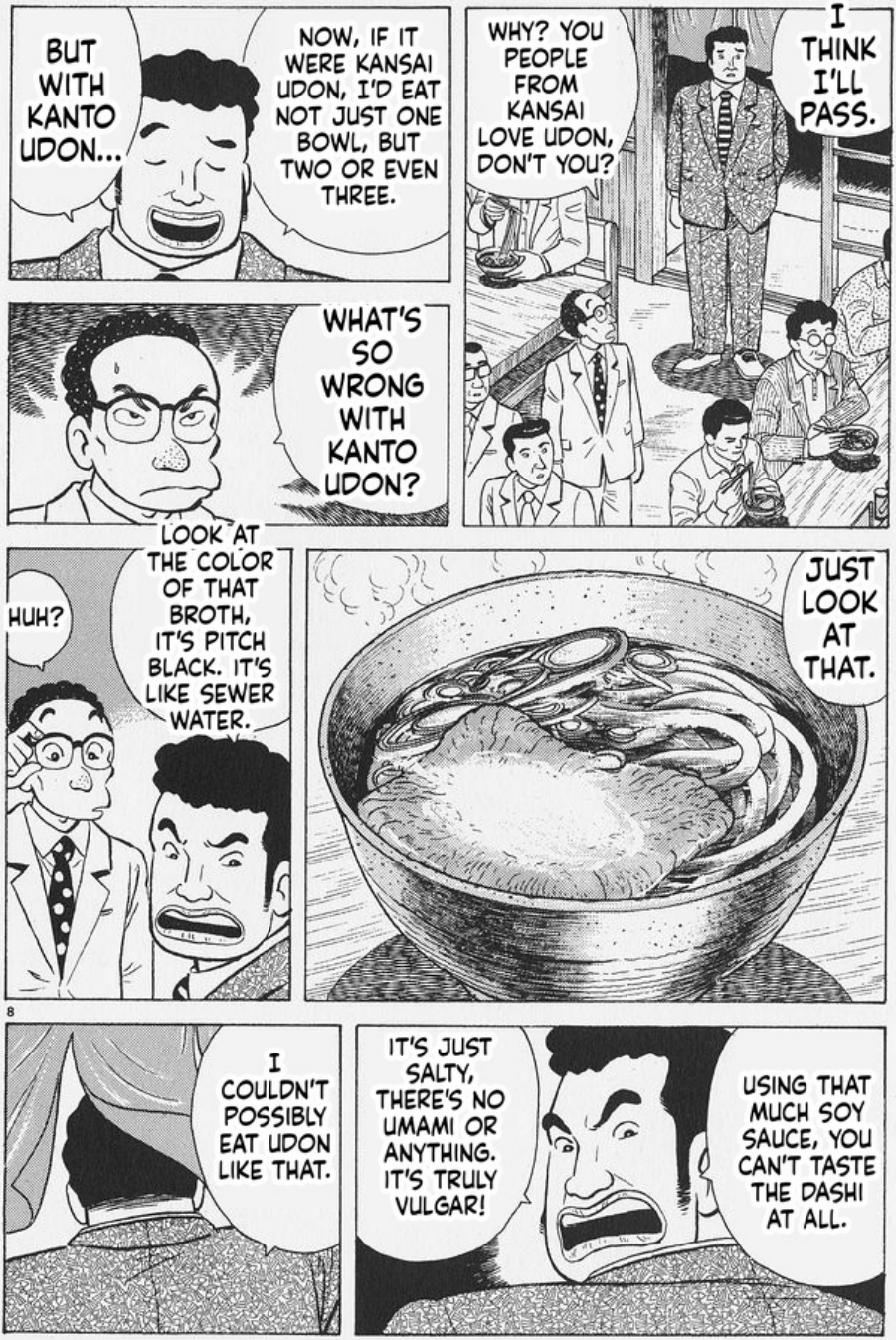
うどん
I'M GETTING A BIT HUNGRY. HOW ABOUT SOME UDON?
SOUNDS GOOD.
LET'S SEE...
AH, THAT TABLE OVER THERE IS OPEN.


BUT WITH KANTO UDON...
NOW, IF IT WERE KANSAI UDON, I'D EAT NOT JUST ONE BOWL, BUT TWO OR EVEN THREE.
WHY? YOU PEOPLE FROM KANSAI LOVE UDON, DON'T YOU?
I THINK I'LL PASS.
WHAT'S SO WRONG WITH KANTO UDON?
HUH?
LOOK AT THE COLOR OF THAT BROTH, IT'S PITCH BLACK. IT'S LIKE SEWER WATER.
JUST LOOK AT THAT.
8
I COULDN'T POSSIBLY EAT UDON LIKE THAT.
IT'S JUST SALTY, THERE'S NO UMAMI OR ANYTHING. IT'S TRULY VULGAR!
USING THAT MUCH SOY SAUCE, YOU CAN'T TASTE THE DASHI AT ALL.

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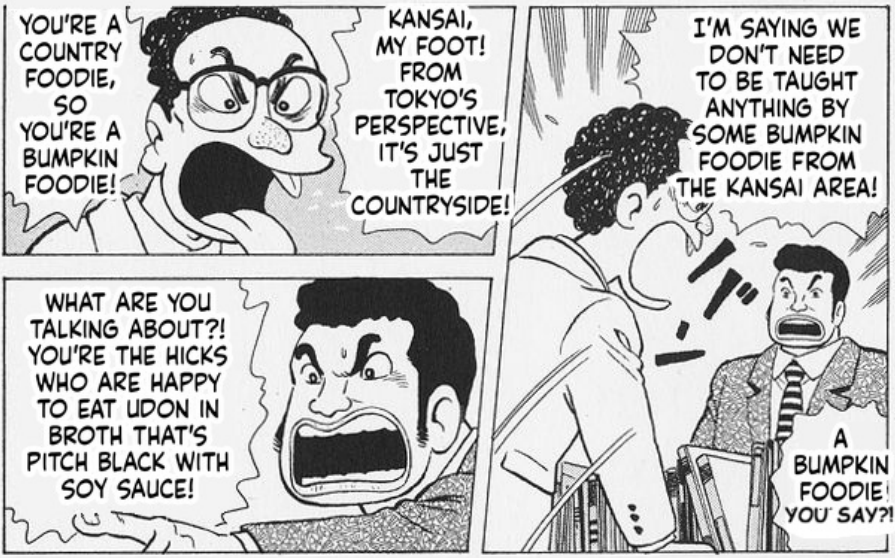
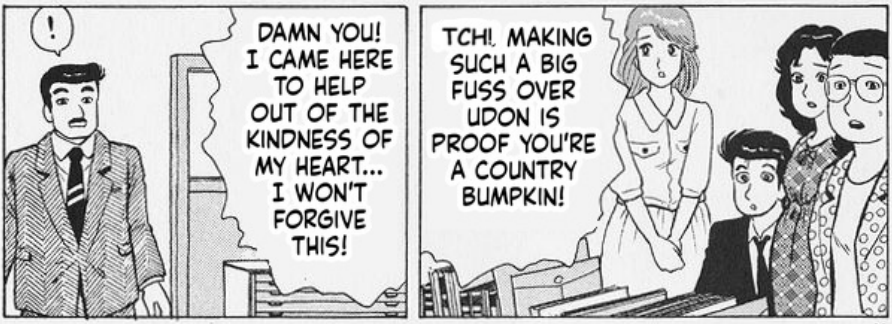
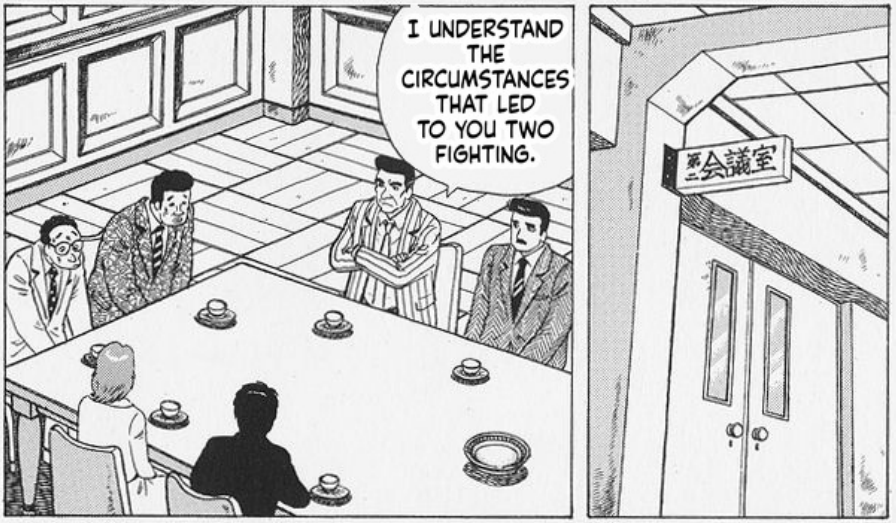
THAT DAMN TSUTSUI-SAN!!!
SO THAT'S HOW IT IS.
TOMII-SAN SAYS THAT FOR THE SAKE OF KANTO PRIDE, HE CAN'T FORGIVE TSUTSUI-SAN.
UGH— HOW IDIOTIC!
THIS IS BEYOND RIDICULOUS!!
HEY THERE.I HELLO.
IS TOMII-SAN IN?
ギョロ

THE CULTURE DEPARTMENT IS WORKING ON THE 'ULTIMATE MENU,' RIGHT? I'LL GIVE YOU MY COOPERATION.
THAT'S RIGHT.
A HELPING HAND TO ME?
EXCUSE ME FOR INTRUDING, BUT I THOUGHT I'D OFFER YOU A HELPING HAND.
AH, DON'T GET OFFENDED NOW. I'M JUST TELLING THE TRUTH.
ふう
IT SEEMS YOU DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT FOOD, MR. TOMII. AT THIS RATE, THE 'ULTIMATE MENU' PROJECT WON'T GO VERY WELL, WILL IT?
STAY OUT OF OUR BUSINESS, YOU MEDDLING BASTARD.
10
I'M TRYING TO BE KIND, AND YOU CALL IT MEDDLING?!
W-WHAT!
LUCKILY, I KNOW SEVERAL SUCH EXPERTS, SO I'LL INTRODUCE THEM TO YOU.
KANSAI IS THE HOME OF ALL THINGS DELICIOUS, SO THAT'S WHERE THE TRUE GOURMETS ARE.
わはは
EVEN A TONE-DEAF PALATE LIKE YOURS CAN REST EASY THEN, RIGHT?

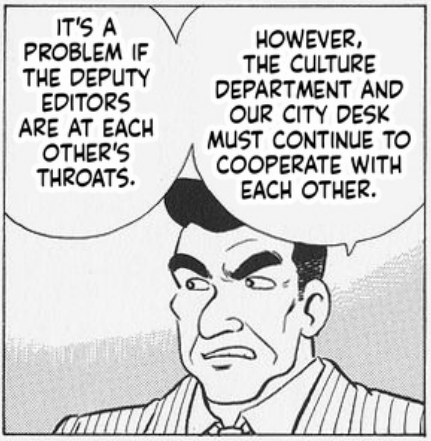

YOU'RE A COUNTRY FOODIE, SO YOU'RE A BUMPKIN FOODIE!
KANSAI, MY FOOT! FROM TOKYO'S PERSPECTIVE, IT'S JUST THE COUNTRYSIDE!
I'M SAYING WE DON'T NEED TO BE TAUGHT ANYTHING BY SOME BUMPKIN FOODIE FROM THE KANSAI AREA!
A BUMPKIN FOODIE, YOU SAY?!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?! YOU'RE THE HICKS WHO ARE HAPPY TO EAT UDON IN BROTH THAT'S PITCH BLACK WITH SOY SAUCE!


!
DAMN YOU! I CAME HERE TO HELP OUT OF THE KINDNESS OF MY HEART... I WON'T FORGIVE THIS!
TCH! MAKING SUCH A BIG FUSS OVER UDON IS PROOF YOU'RE A COUNTRY BUMPKIN!

BOTH OF YOU, STOP IT!
STOP IT!
YOU BASTARD! I'M GONNA BEAT THE HELL OUT OF YOU!
CUT THE CRAP! LET'S SETTLE THIS RIGHT NOW!


I UNDERSTAND THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT LED TO YOU TWO FIGHTING.
第二会議室

I AM TERRIBLY SORRY...


IT'S A PROBLEM IF THE DEPUTY EDITORS ARE AT EACH OTHER'S THROATS.
HOWEVER, THE CULTURE DEPARTMENT AND OUR CITY DESK MUST CONTINUE TO COOPERATE WITH EACH OTHER.

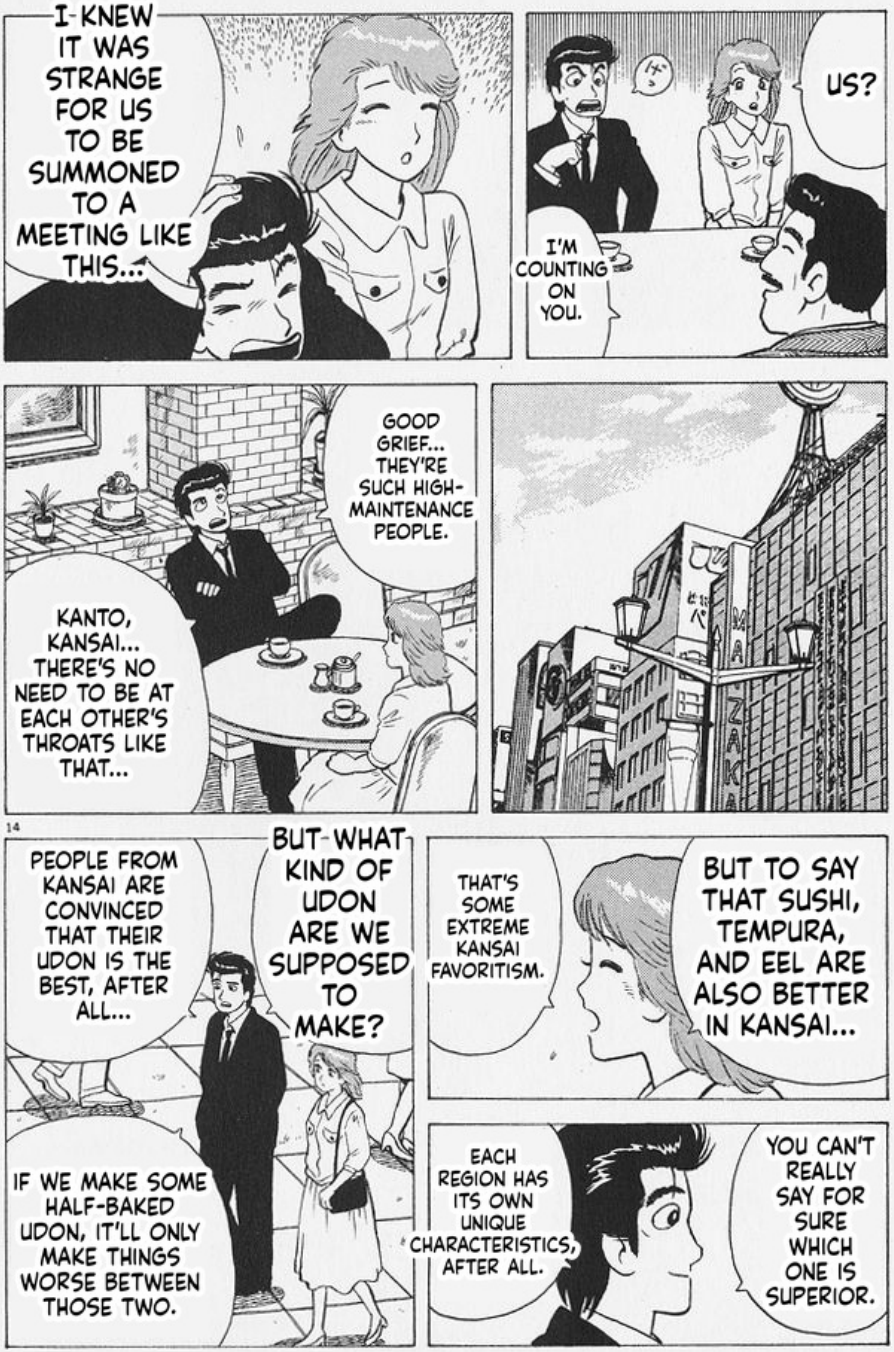
FORGIVE ME...

12

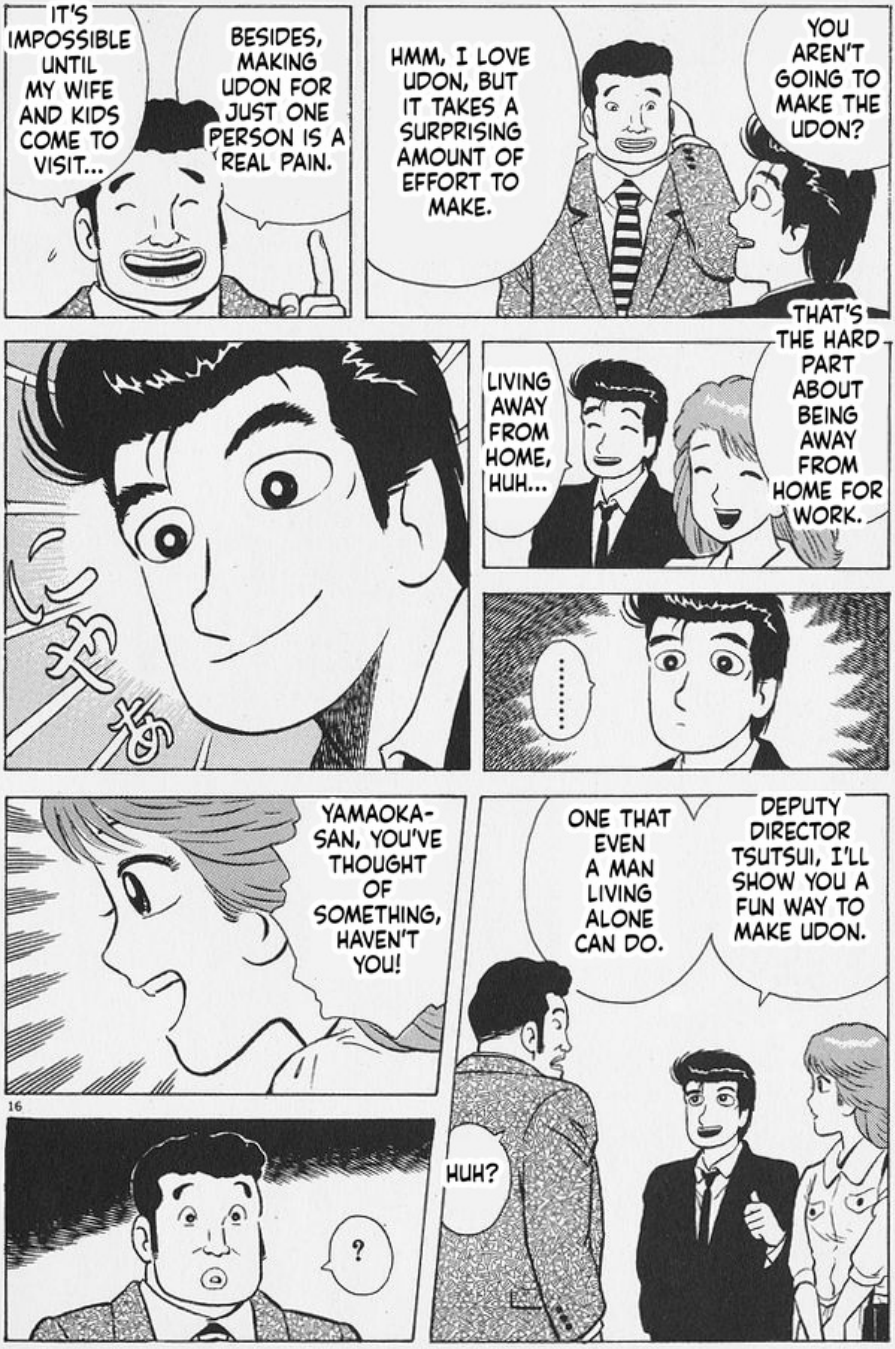
HE SAID THAT KANTO-STYLE UDON IS SO VULGAR HE CAN'T EVEN EAT IT!
T-THAT'S RIGHT!

NOW, THE PROBLEM IS THE UDON.
WELL, YAMAOKA WILL GIVE US A DETAILED TALK ABOUT KANTO'S SUSHI, TEMPURA, AND EEL LATER ON.

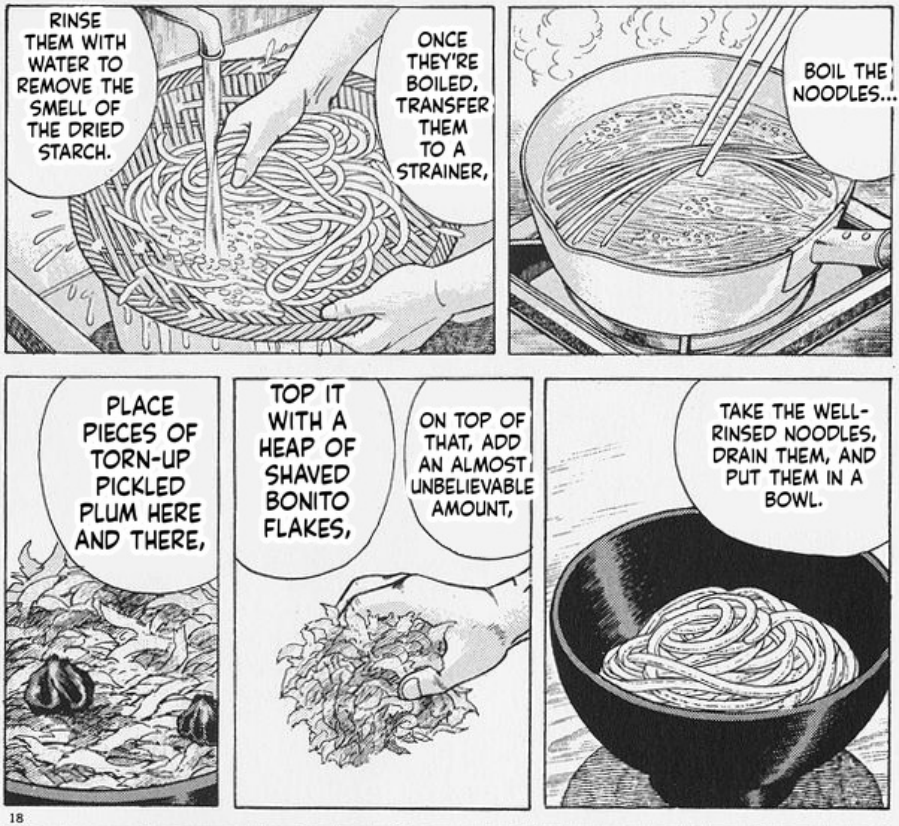
I SEE. AFTER ALL, THE BROTH FOR UDON AND SOBA IN KANTO USES PLENTY OF SOY SAUCE.
I SEE...
BUT STILL, UDON WITH BROTH THAT'S PITCH BLACK FROM SOY SAUCE...
KANSAI PEOPLE ARE CHEAP, SO THEY SKIP THE SOY SAUCE AND JUST DUMP IN A BUNCH OF SALT!
THAT'S RIGHT, EXACTLY!
IS LIGHT, THE SALT CONCENTRATION ISN'T ACTUALLY THAT LOW.
HOWEVER, WHILE THE COLOR OF KANSAI UDON BROTH
WH-WHAT?! YOU'RE SAYING PEOPLE FROM KANSAI ARE STINGY?!
NOW, NOW...
13
I'M GOING TO ASK MS. KURITA AND YAMAOKA TO PUT IN A LITTLE EFFORT FOR US.
WITH UDON?
HUH?
AND THAT'S WHY WE'LL USE THE VERY UDON YOU'RE FIGHTING OVER TO BRING YOU TWO TOGETHER.


I-KNEW IT WAS STRANGE FOR US TO BE SUMMONED TO A MEETING LIKE THIS...
US?
I'M COUNTING ON YOU.
GOOD GRIEF... THEY'RE SUCH HIGH-MAINTENANCE PEOPLE.
KANTO, KANSAI... THERE'S NO NEED TO BE AT EACH OTHER'S THROATS LIKE THAT...
14
PEOPLE FROM KANSAI ARE CONVINCED THAT THEIR UDON IS THE BEST, AFTER ALL...
BUT-WHAT KIND OF UDON ARE WE SUPPOSED TO MAKE?
IF WE MAKE SOME HALF-BAKED UDON, IT'LL ONLY MAKE THINGS WORSE BETWEEN THOSE TWO.
THAT'S SOME EXTREME KANSAI FAVORITISM.
BUT TO SAY THAT SUSHI, TEMPURA, AND EEL ARE ALSO BETTER IN KANSAI...
EACH REGION HAS ITS OWN UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS, AFTER ALL.
YOU CAN'T REALLY SAY FOR SURE WHICH ONE IS SUPERIOR.

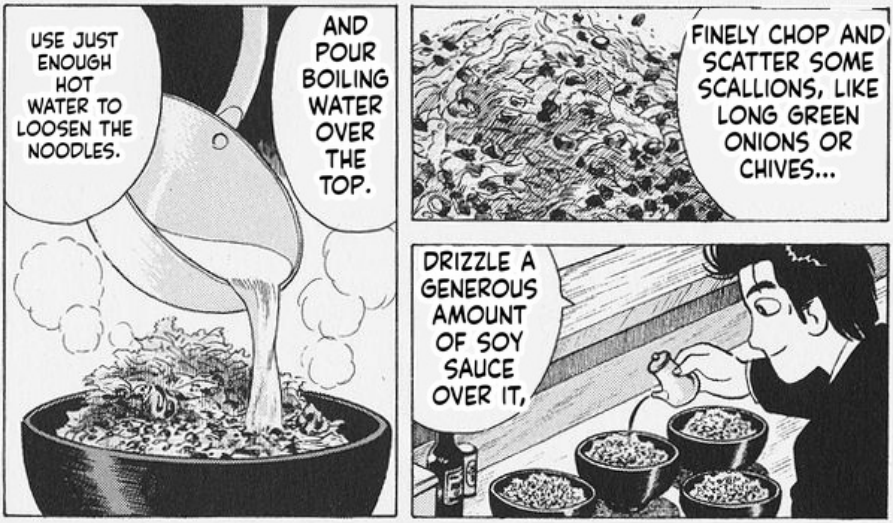
EVEN IF YOU SAY A 'CURVEBALL'...
UUU...
ISN'T THERE SOME KIND OF CURVEBALL WE CAN THROW?
THIS IS TROUBLING... IT'S A HUGE DILEMMA...
HI, YOU GUYS.
OH, DEPUTY MANAGER TSUTSUI.
OH, ARE YOU DOING SOME SHOPPING?
15
WELL, IT'S BETTER FOR MY PEACE OF MIND TO MAKE SOMETHING THAT SUITS MY TASTE RATHER THAN EATING OUT AT SOME STRANGE PLACE IN TOKYO.
NO, IT'S JUST THAT MY WIFE AND KIDS HAVEN'T MOVED TO TOKYO YET, SO I'M COOKING FOR MYSELF.
WELL, LITTLE BY LITTLE.
YOU'LL HAVE TO GET USED TO THE FOOD IN TOKYO EVENTUALLY...
WOW, HOW IMPRESSIVE. COOKING FOR YOURSELF?

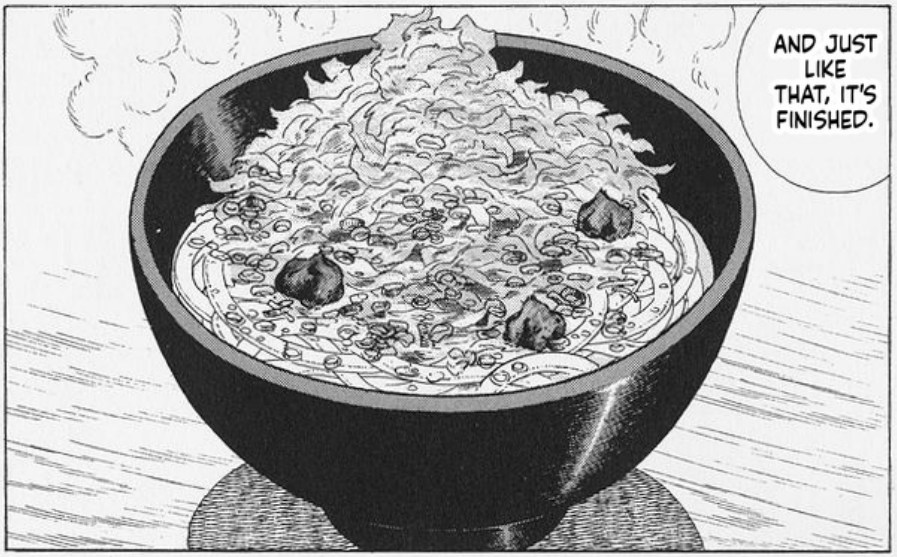

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE UNTIL MY WIFE AND KIDS COME TO VISIT...
BESIDES, MAKING UDON FOR JUST ONE PERSON IS A REAL PAIN.
HMM, I LOVE UDON, BUT IT TAKES A SURPRISING AMOUNT OF EFFORT TO MAKE.
YOU AREN'T GOING TO MAKE THE UDON?
THAT'S THE HARD PART ABOUT BEING AWAY FROM HOME FOR WORK.
LIVING AWAY FROM HOME, HUH...
.....
YAMAOKA-SAN, YOU'VE THOUGHT OF SOMETHING, HAVEN'T YOU!
16
?
HUH?
ONE THAT EVEN A MAN LIVING ALONE CAN DO.
DEPUTY DIRECTOR TSUTSUI, I'LL SHOW YOU A FUN WAY TO MAKE UDON.

IF YOU START BY KNEADING THE NOODLES, IT TAKES TWO OR THREE HOURS, AND IF YOU GET PARTICULAR ABOUT MAKING THE BROTH, IT'S A REAL ORDEAL...
UDON SEEMS SIMPLE, BUT IT'S ACTUALLY QUITE A LOT OF WORK.
岡星
WE WILL BE USING DRIED NOODLES.
AND YET, I SHALL TEACH YOU HOW TO MAKE A DELICIOUS BOWL OF UDON.
SO TODAY, FOR THE LAZY AND THOSE LIVING ALONE, I'LL SHOW YOU A SIMPLE METHOD,
17
OF COURSE, IF YOU CAN GET YOUR HANDS ON FRESH NOODLES, NOTHING BEATS THAT.
AKITA'S "INANIWA UDON" SEEMS TO HAVE THE PERFECT CHEWY AND FIRM TEXTURE FOR THIS.
秋田名産
稲庭うどん


RINSE THEM WITH WATER TO REMOVE THE SMELL OF THE DRIED STARCH.
ONCE THEY'RE BOILED, TRANSFER THEM TO A STRAINER,
BOIL THE NOODLES...
PLACE PIECES OF TORN-UP PICKLED PLUM HERE AND THERE,
TOP IT WITH A HEAP OF SHAVED BONITO FLAKES,
ON TOP OF THAT, ADD AN ALMOST UNBELIEVABLE AMOUNT,
TAKE THE WELL-RINSED NOODLES, DRAIN THEM, AND PUT THEM IN A BOWL.

18


USE JUST ENOUGH HOT WATER TO LOOSEN THE NOODLES.
AND POUR BOILING WATER OVER THE TOP.
FINELY CHOP AND SCATTER SOME SCALLIONS, LIKE LONG GREEN ONIONS OR CHIVES...
DRIZZLE A GENEROUS AMOUNT OF SOY SAUCE OVER IT,


AND JUST LIKE THAT, IT'S FINISHED.

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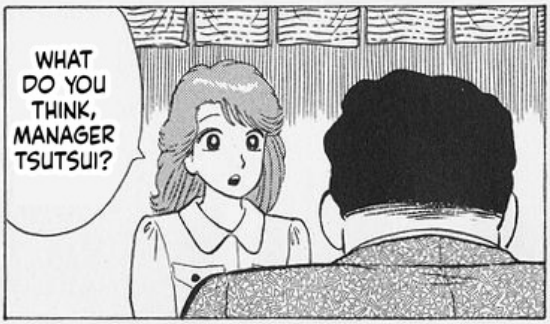
HUH?
WITH JUST THIS?
MIX IT WELL BEFORE EATING.

19


WHAT DO YOU THINK, MANAGER TSUTSUI?

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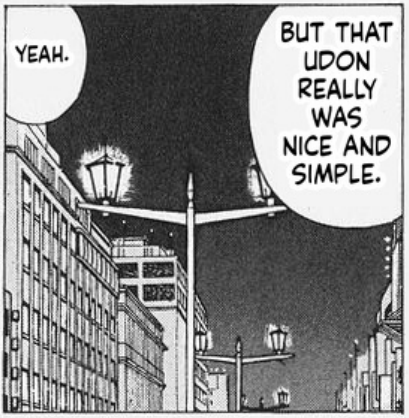
くくく
IT'S JUST SO FUNNY THAT UDON MADE THIS STUPIDLY SIMPLE COULD TASTE THIS GOOD!
IT'S JUST SO FUNNY, I CAN'T HELP IT!
はは
W-WHAT'S THE MATTER?
IS IT NOT TO YOUR LIKING?
20
WITH THIS, KANTO OR KANSAI DOESN'T MATTER! IT'S JUST DELICIOUS!
I'M GLAD YOU LIKE IT.
ホッ

DEPUTY DIRECTOR TOMII IS A GENIUS WHEN IT COMES TO BEING CLUMSY.
NO, REALLY, I...
WELL, LET'S JUST LEAVE IT AT THAT.
WOULDN'T IT BE HARDER TO MAKE THIS TASTE BAD?
EVEN A LAZY, CLUMSY PERSON LIKE ME CAN MAKE THIS!
NOW, WILL YOU TWO SHAKE HANDS?
SO, IT SEEMS WE ALL LIKE IT.
THIS UNUSUAL, LAZY, BACHELOR-STYLE UDON IS ACTUALLY QUITE GOOD, ISN'T IT?
YAMAOKA!
NOW, NOW...
21
LET'S WORK TOGETHER AND COMBINE THE BEST OF KANTO AND KANSAI!
LET'S TRY TO GET ALONG.

IF I PREP A BUNCH OF DISHES LIKE THAT, I CAN LIVE MY LIFE ALONE WITHOUT EVER GETTING MARRIED.
IT'S PERFECT!


BUT THAT UDON REALLY WAS NICE AND SIMPLE.
YEAH.

22

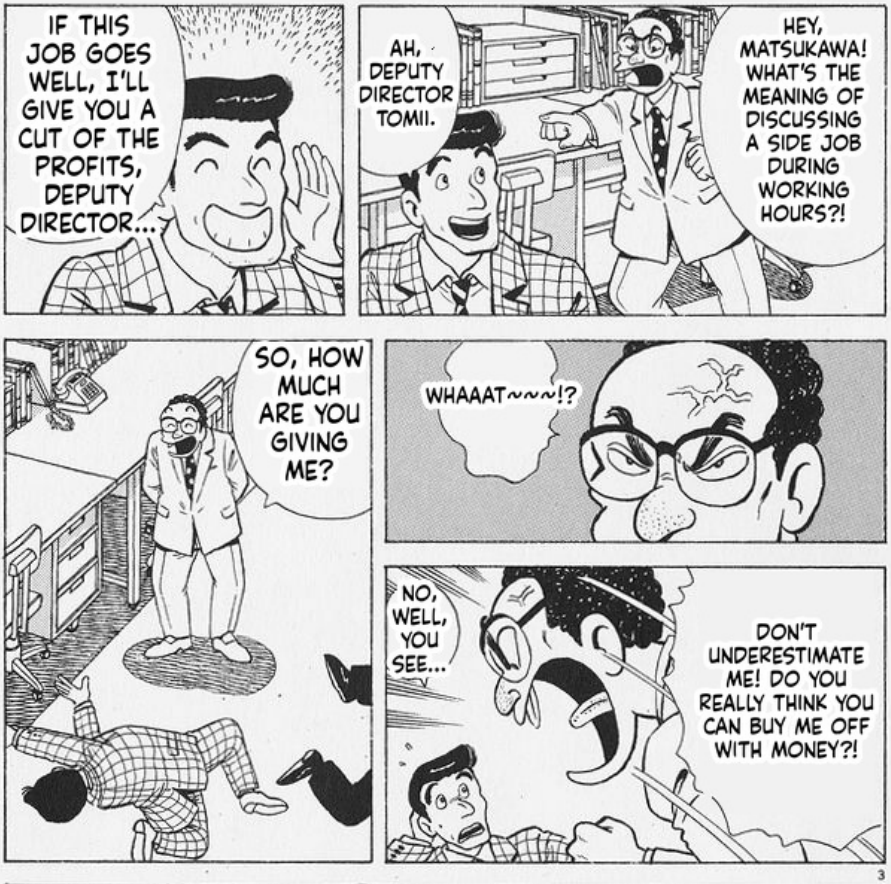
HEY! YOU SAID YOU WERE GOING TO TREAT ME TO DINNER!!!

OH! SO YOU'RE GOING TO LIVE ALL BY YOURSELF?!
FINE BY ME!

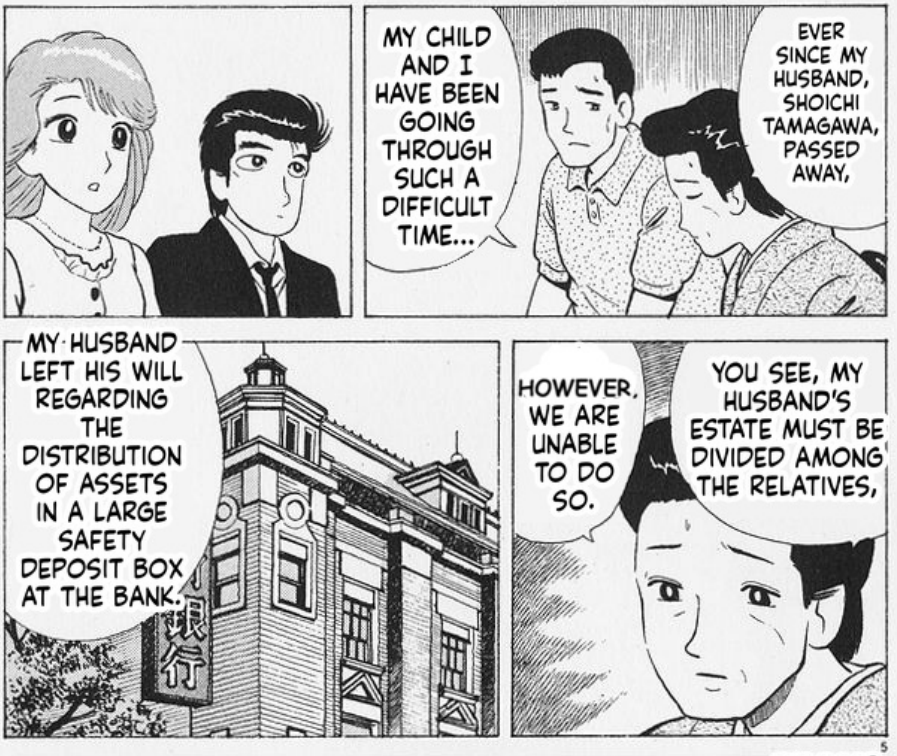
HUH? DID I SAY SOMETHING WRONG...?

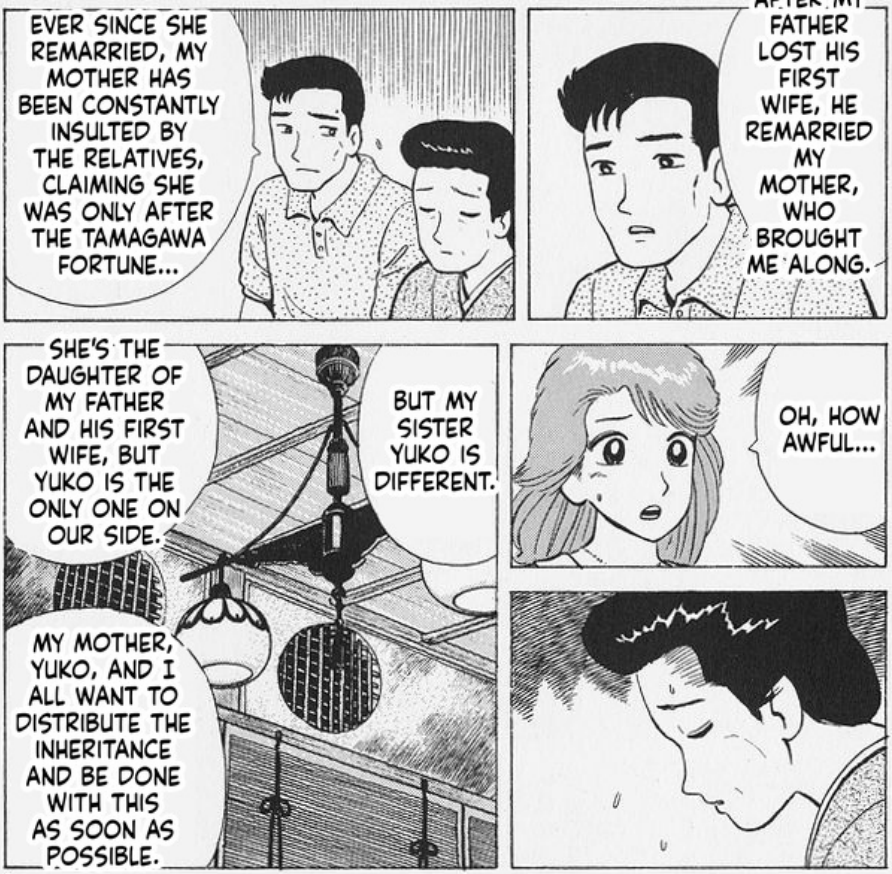
第4話
美味しい暗号

I FOUND YOU A GREAT PART-TIME JOB!
HEY, YAMAOKA!
ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND YEEEN! ONE MILLION YEEEN!
MONEY?! I WANT IT!
ガバッ
WHAT?!
NOT THIS AGAIN...
2
HIEEE— THANK YOUUU—
DON'T BE SO STINGY, I'M GONNA LET YOU MAKE TENS OF MILLIONS OF YEN!
あたた…
THAT STUPID VOICE JUST NOW IS VIBRATING IN MY STOMACH...
ARE YOU OKAY?

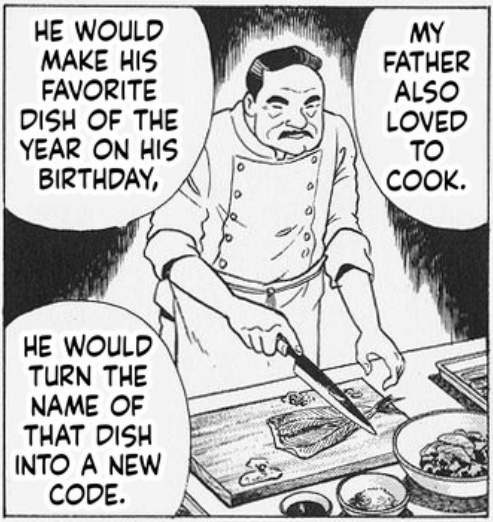

IF THIS JOB GOES WELL, I'LL GIVE YOU A CUT OF THE PROFITS, DEPUTY DIRECTOR...
AH, DEPUTY DIRECTOR TOMII.
HEY, MATSUKAWA! WHAT'S THE MEANING OF DISCUSSING A SIDE JOB DURING WORKING HOURS?!
SO, HOW MUCH ARE YOU GIVING ME?
WHAAAT~~~!?
NO, WELL, YOU SEE...
DON'T UNDERESTIMATE ME! DO YOU REALLY THINK YOU CAN BUY ME OFF WITH MONEY?!
3
LAST SUMMER, THE PREVIOUS HEAD DIED SUDDENLY, AND HIS SON TOOK OVER THE BUSINESS...
THE TAMAGAWA FAMILY ARE THE OWNERS OF THE TAMAGAWA GROUP, WHICH HOLDS NUMEROUS COMPANIES IN CONSTRUCTION, REAL ESTATE, RENTALS, AND HOTELS. THEY'RE INCREDIBLY WEALTHY.

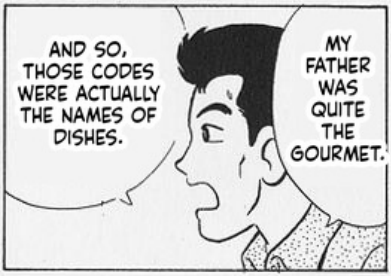
SO, IS HE A VULGAR PERSON LIKE YOU, MATSUKAWA-SAN?
NOT AT ALL, HE'S NOTHING LIKE A VULGAR MAN SUCH AS MYSELF...
THAT SON OF HIS HAPPENS TO BE MY JUNIOR FROM UNIVERSITY.
HEY, WAIT A MINUTE!!!
4


MY CHILD AND I HAVE BEEN GOING THROUGH SUCH A DIFFICULT TIME...
EVER SINCE MY HUSBAND, SHOICHI TAMAGAWA, PASSED AWAY,
MY HUSBAND LEFT HIS WILL REGARDING THE DISTRIBUTION OF ASSETS IN A LARGE SAFETY DEPOSIT BOX AT THE BANK.
銀行
HOWEVER, WE ARE UNABLE TO DO SO.
YOU SEE, MY HUSBAND'S ESTATE MUST BE DIVIDED AMONG THE RELATIVES,
5
MY HUSBAND USED TO CHANGE THAT CODE EVERY YEAR ON HIS BIRTHDAY.
IN ADDITION TO THE KEY, YOU HAVE TO ENTER A CODE INTO THE COMPUTER, OR IT WON'T OPEN.
THE DOOR TO THE SAFETY DEPOSIT BOX IS EQUIPPED WITH AN ELECTRONIC LOCK,
HE DIED BEFORE HE COULD TELL ME THE NEW CODE...

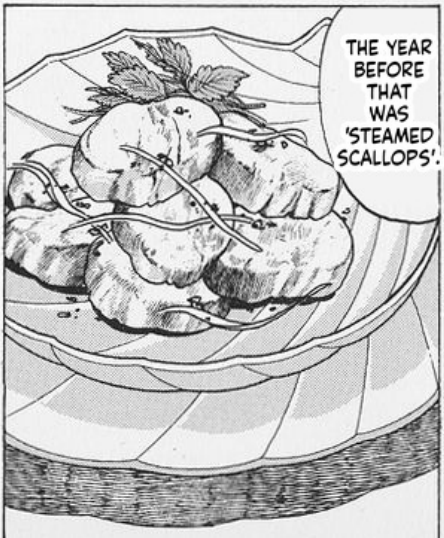

EVER SINCE SHE REMARRIED, MY MOTHER HAS BEEN CONSTANTLY INSULTED BY THE RELATIVES, CLAIMING SHE WAS ONLY AFTER THE TAMAGAWA FORTUNE...
AFTER MY FATHER LOST HIS FIRST WIFE, HE REMARRIED MY MOTHER, WHO BROUGHT ME ALONG.
SHE'S THE DAUGHTER OF MY FATHER AND HIS FIRST WIFE, BUT YUKO IS THE ONLY ONE ON OUR SIDE.
BUT MY SISTER YUKO IS DIFFERENT.
MY MOTHER, YUKO, AND I ALL WANT TO DISTRIBUTE THE INHERITANCE AND BE DONE WITH THIS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
OH, HOW AWFUL...
6
THAT'S RIGHT, I HAVE TO FIND THE CODE THAT SHOICHI TAMAGAWA FAILED TO PASS ON TO THESE TWO.
N... NO WAY, YOU MEAN THE JOB IS...
TO DO THAT, I MUST DISCOVER THE CODE TO THE SAFETY DEPOSIT BOX NO MATTER WHAT...

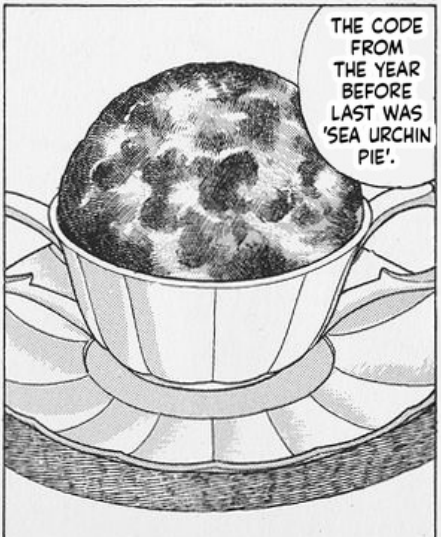
HUH?
THIS IS SOMETHING ONLY YOU GUYS CAN DO.
WAIT-A SECOND, I'M NOT CUT OUT FOR PLAYING DETECTIVE!
NO,

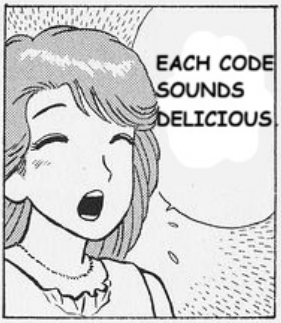

HE WOULD MAKE HIS FAVORITE DISH OF THE YEAR ON HIS BIRTHDAY,
MY FATHER ALSO LOVED TO COOK.
HE WOULD TURN THE NAME OF THAT DISH INTO A NEW CODE.

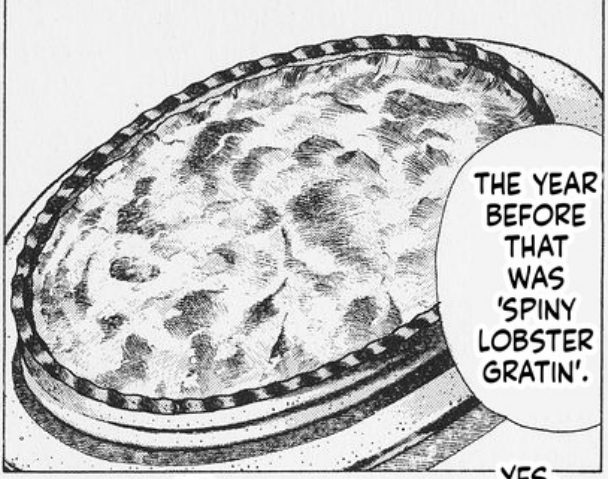

AND SO, THOSE CODES WERE ACTUALLY THE NAMES OF DISHES.
MY FATHER WAS QUITE THE GOURMET.

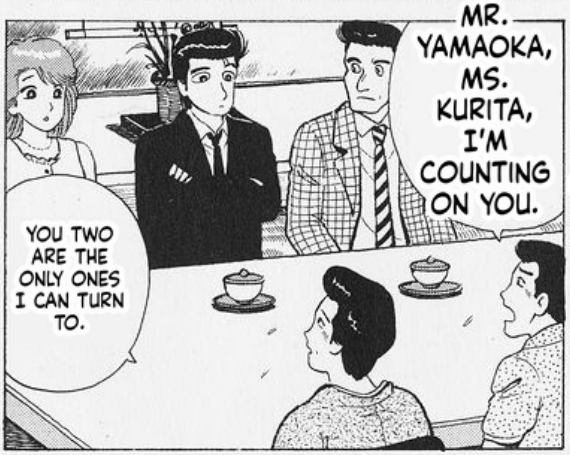
THE NAME OF A DISH?!


THE YEAR BEFORE THAT WAS 'STEAMED SCALLOPS'.


THE CODE FROM THE YEAR BEFORE LAST WAS 'SEA URCHIN PIE'.


EACH CODE SOUNDS DELICIOUS.


THE YEAR BEFORE THAT WAS 'SPINY LOBSTER GRATIN'.


MR. YAMAOKA, MS. KURITA, I'M COUNTING ON YOU.
YOU TWO ARE THE ONLY ONES I CAN TURN TO.

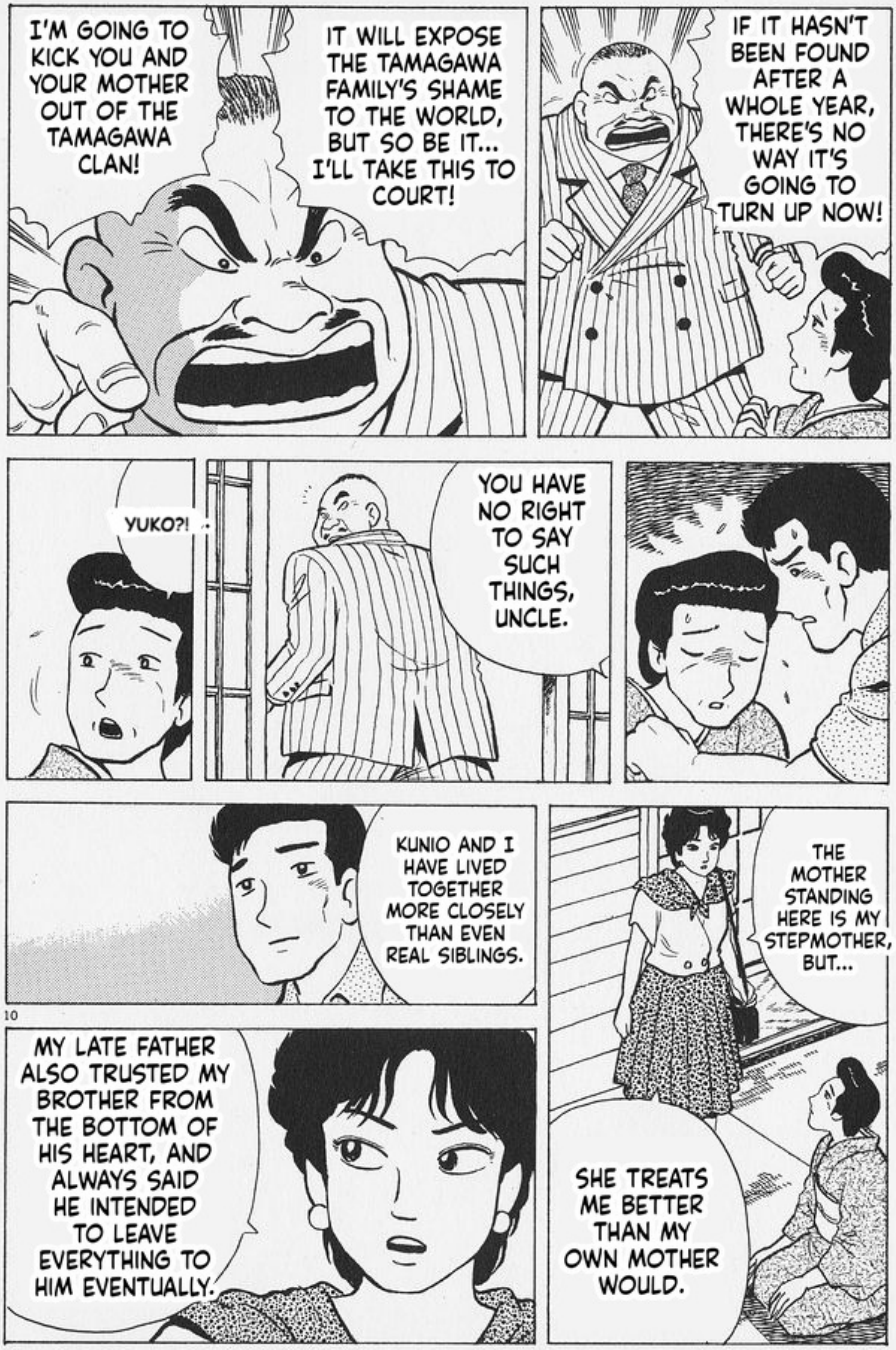
YES, EVERY SINGLE ONE OF THEM WAS QUITE DELICIOUS.
MATSUKAWA TELLS ME THAT YOU'RE IN CHARGE OF THE ULTIMATE MENU.

8

I'M AT A LOSS...
NO WAY...

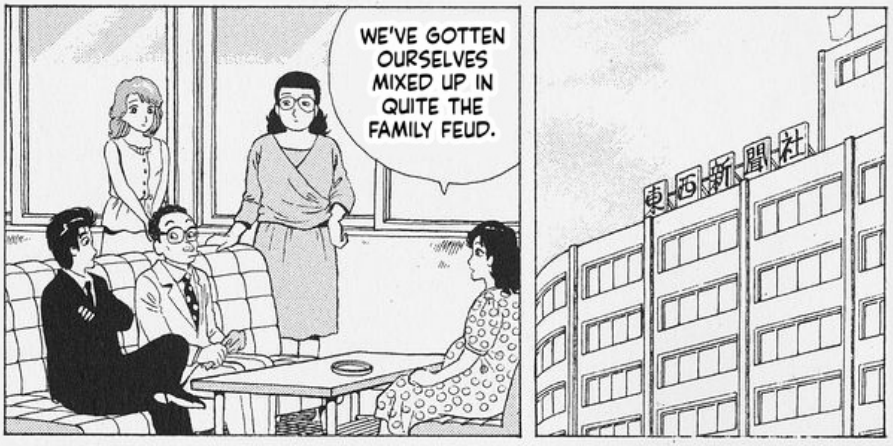
ドスドスドス

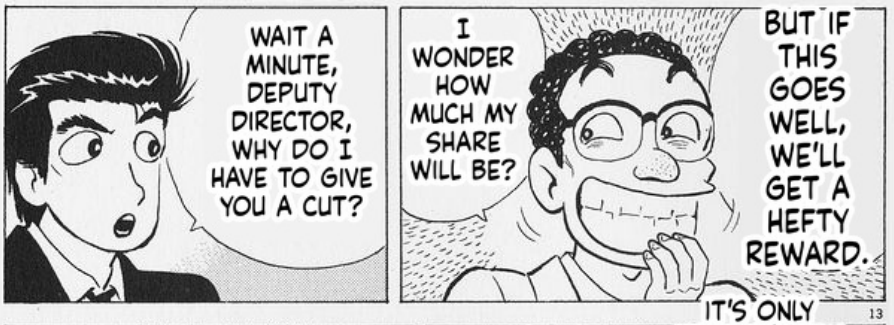
WHAT KIND OF EVIL SCHEME ARE YOU PLOTTING, GATHERING HERE IN SECRET?!
UNCLE!
AN EVIL SCHEME? HOW COULD YOU!
HMPH, MAKING PATHETIC EXCUSES ABOUT NOT KNOWING THE SAFETY DEPOSIT BOX CODE!
YOU INTEND FOR MOTHER AND CHILD TO MONOPOLIZE MY BROTHER'S ENTIRE FORTUNE!
BUT WE WISH TO PRIORITIZE MY HUSBAND'S FINAL WISHES ABOVE ALL ELSE.
IF MY HUSBAND LEFT SUCH INSTRUCTIONS IN HIS WILL, WE WILL FOLLOW THEM...
THAT IS WHY WE MUST FIRST FIND THE CODE...
HE DID NOT TELL ME THE NEW SECURITY CODE OF HIS DEPOSIT BOX.
9
I WILL BE THE ONE TO TAKE CHARGE OF THE TAMAGAWA GROUP.
LEAVE THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE INHERITANCE TO ME.


I'M GOING TO KICK YOU AND YOUR MOTHER OUT OF THE TAMAGAWA CLAN!
IT WILL EXPOSE THE TAMAGAWA FAMILY'S SHAME TO THE WORLD, BUT SO BE IT... I'LL TAKE THIS TO COURT!
IF IT HASN'T BEEN FOUND AFTER A WHOLE YEAR, THERE'S NO WAY IT'S GOING TO TURN UP NOW!
YUKO?!
YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO SAY SUCH THINGS, UNCLE.
KUNIO AND I HAVE LIVED TOGETHER MORE CLOSELY THAN EVEN REAL SIBLINGS.
10
MY LATE FATHER ALSO TRUSTED MY BROTHER FROM THE BOTTOM OF HIS HEART, AND ALWAYS SAID HE INTENDED TO LEAVE EVERYTHING TO HIM EVENTUALLY.
THE MOTHER STANDING HERE IS MY STEPMOTHER, BUT...
SHE TREATS ME BETTER THAN MY OWN MOTHER WOULD.

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW MUCH SHE HAS SUFFERED...?
YUKO... IT'S ALRIGHT...
AND YET YOU, UNCLE, AND THE OTHER RELATIVES HAVE TORMENTED MY MOTHER WITH YOUR DISGUSTING SLANDERS.
OUR FAMILY IS HAPPY AND WE TRUST ONE ANOTHER.
W-WHY, YOU...!
AREN'T YOU THE ONES ACTUALLY TRYING TO TAKE OVER THE TAMAGAWA FAMILY!?
UNCLE, YOUR WORDS JUST NOW HAVE MADE YOUR INTENTIONS AND THOSE OF THE OTHER RELATIVES PERFECTLY CLEAR.
11
YUKO...
HANG IN THERE, MOTHER. I'M RIGHT HERE WITH YOU.
I'M GOING TO KICK EVERY LAST ONE OF YOU OUT OF THE TAMAGAWA FAMILY!
ドスッ
ドスドス

HE SAID DAD HAD ASKED 'KINKASA-TEI' TO GET HIM THE FINEST ABALONE AVAILABLE.
YOU SEE, FOR LAST YEAR'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION,
ACTUALLY, YESTERDAY IN GINZA, I RAN INTO THE OWNER OF 'KINKASA-TEI,' A RESTAURANT MY FATHER FREQUENTED.
THAT'S WHEN I HEARD SOMETHING WE DIDN'T KNOW...
MY HUSBAND LOVED ABALONE.
THE CODE IS THE NAME OF AN ABALONE DISH!
THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT IT!
WHICH MEANS!
DAD WAS PLANNING TO MAKE AN ABALONE DISH!
12
WE'LL HAVE TO TRY EVERY ABALONE DISH IMAGINABLE —JAPANESE, WESTERN, AND CHINESE.
HMM.
WE HAVE A LEAD!


WE'VE GOTTEN OURSELVES MIXED UP IN QUITE THE FAMILY FEUD.
東西新聞社


WAIT A MINUTE, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, WHY DO I HAVE TO GIVE YOU A CUT?
I WONDER HOW MUCH MY SHARE WILL BE?
BUT IF THIS GOES WELL, WE'LL GET A HEFTY REWARD.

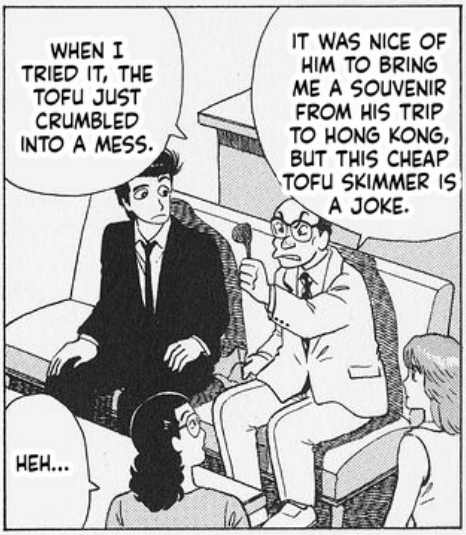
13

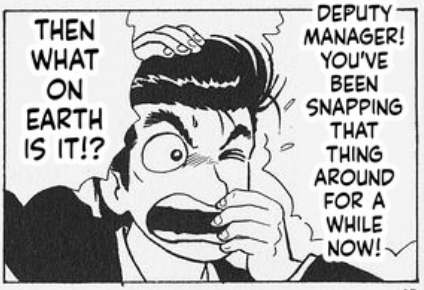
TO THINK YOU'D TRY TO SKIM OFF YOUR SUBORDINATE'S SIDE JOB!
UGH, WHAT A BOSS!

HOW PATHETIC.
WHAT A COUPLE OF MORONS.

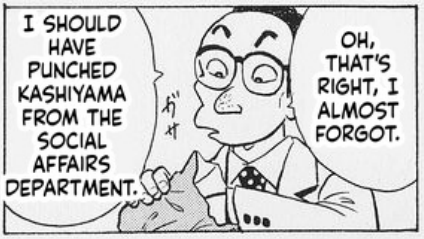
MONEY, IT'S ONLY RIGHT TO PAY A FEE TO THE COMPANY —AND BY EXTENSION, YOUR BOSS!
IT'S ONLY NATURAL! YOU GAINED ALL THAT CULINARY KNOWLEDGE WHILE WORKING ON THE 'ULTIMATE MENU' AT THE COMPANY'S EXPENSE. IF YOU USE THAT TO MAKE

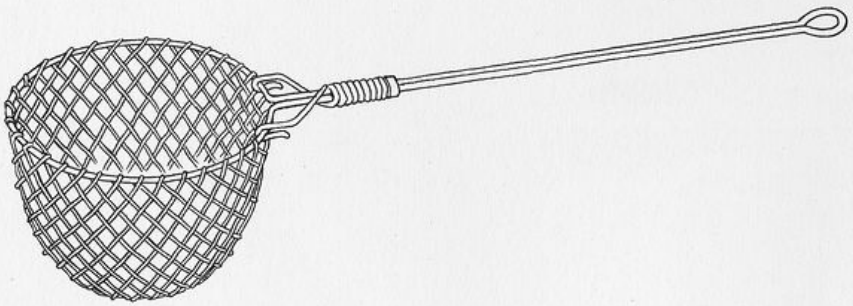
HOW DID IT GO? THE CODE?
AH, MR. MATSUKAWA.
IT WAS NO GOOD...
OH MY... EVEN THOUGH I GAVE YOU SO MANY...
BUT NOT A SINGLE ONE WAS THE CORRECT CODE.
I TRIED EVERY SINGLE ABALONE DISH NAME YOU WROTE DOWN, ONE BY ONE...
14
HEY, YAMAOKA! WHAT ABOUT MY SHARE? WHERE'S MY SHARE!?
THERE MUST BE SOMETHING ELSE!
YAMAOKA, THERE MUST BE OTHER ABALONE DISHES. LOOK FOR MORE.
I USED EVERY ABALONE DISH I KNEW, AND EVEN LOOKED THROUGH BOOKS...
IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE, YOU KNOW.


WHEN I TRIED IT, THE TOFU JUST CRUMBLED INTO A MESS.
IT WAS NICE OF HIM TO BRING ME A SOUVENIR FROM HIS TRIP TO HONG KONG, BUT THIS CHEAP TOFU SKIMMER IS A JOKE.
HEH...


THEN WHAT ON EARTH IS IT!?
HEY, DEPUTY MANAGER! YOU'VE BEEN SNAPPING THAT THING AROUND FOR A WHILE NOW!

15


I SHOULD HAVE PUNCHED KASHIYAMA FROM THE SOCIAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT.
OH, THAT'S RIGHT, I ALMOST FORGOT.

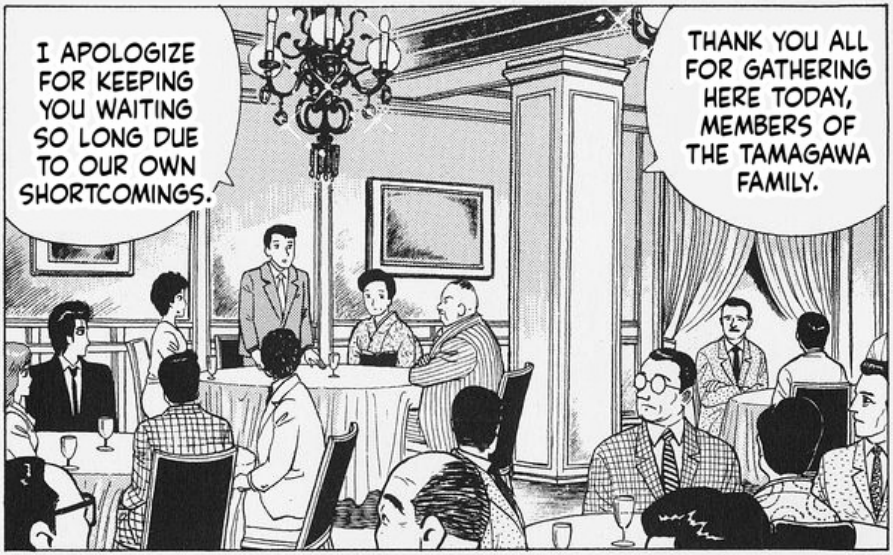


THAT ISN'T A TOFU SKIMMER.
OH, DEPUTY MANAGER.

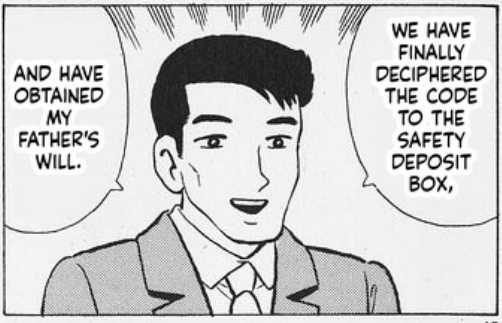
EH? THEN WHAT IS THIS THING?

I WON'T BE SATISFIED UNTIL I'VE PUNCHED HIS LIGHTS OUT!
THAT BASTARD KASHIYAMA GIVING ME SUCH A PIECE OF CRAP, HE'S MAKING A FOOL OUT OF ME!

W-WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
MAYBE THIS IS IT!
YEAH!
.....
HEY, DID YOU FIND A CODE?!
16
にやり
EH?!
I CAN'T BELIEVE I DIDN'T THINK OF THIS BEFORE.
RESTAURANT
PUPUOT


I APOLOGIZE FOR KEEPING YOU WAITING SO LONG DUE TO OUR OWN SHORTCOMINGS.
THANK YOU ALL FOR GATHERING HERE TODAY, MEMBERS OF THE TAMAGAWA FAMILY.

OUR LEGAL COUNSEL HAS ALSO VERIFIED THAT THIS IS INDEED MY FATHER'S AUTHENTIC WILL.


AND HAVE OBTAINED MY FATHER'S WILL.
WE HAVE FINALLY DECIPHERED THE CODE TO THE SAFETY DEPOSIT BOX,

17

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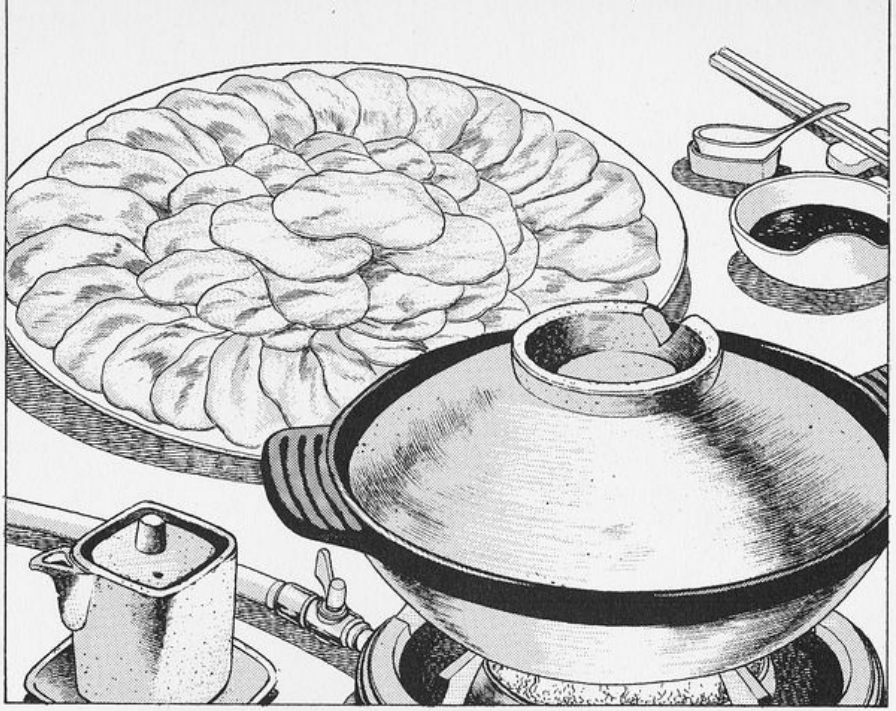
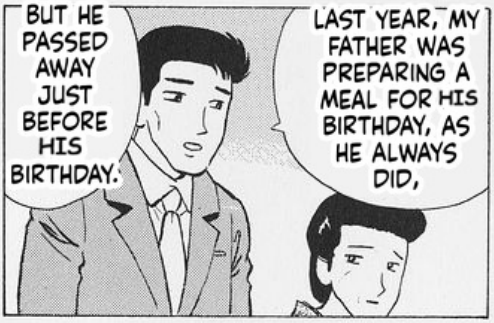



BUT HE PASSED AWAY JUST BEFORE HIS BIRTHDAY.
LAST YEAR, MY FATHER WAS PREPARING A MEAL FOR HIS BIRTHDAY, AS HE ALWAYS DID,

WHAT IS THIS?

YAMAOKA-SAN, PLEASE EXPLAIN THE DISH.

18

THE MEAL THAT MR. SHOICHI TAMAGAWA PREPARED FOR THAT BIRTHDAY WAS...
ガヲ

I WAS ABLE TO FIND OUT WHAT THAT DISH WAS AND RECREATE IT HERE.
WITH THE COOPERATION OF THE PEOPLE FROM TOZAI NEWS WHO ARE HERE TODAY,

 *TL NOTE: HAWK'S CLAW CHILIS ARE ABOUT 30,000-50,000 SHU. JUST FOR COMPARISON SAKE, THAT'S ABOUT THE SAME AS A CAYENNE OR TABASCO PEPPER.

A SMOOTH TEXTURE ON THE TONGUE! A CHEWY, SPRINGY BITE!
INSTEAD OF THE SLIMY SENSATION OF RAW ABALONE,
THE SOUP ALSO HAS A RICH FLAVOR THAT FIRMLY CAPTURES THE UMAMI OF THE ABALONE!
BY APPLYING HEAT, THE ABALONE DEVELOPS A DEEPER FLAVOR!
PLEASE, SAVOR IT SLOWLY.
WITH THE ADDED FLAVORS OF CHICKEN AND CHINESE HAM, THE BROTH IN THAT POT IS A TRIO OF UMAMI.
I'VE DISCOVERED YET ANOTHER HIDDEN WONDER OF THE ABALONE!
ズルー
I CAN'T LEAVE A SINGLE DROP BEHIND!
20
I SEE, SO SEEING THIS GAVE YOU THE IDEA FOR ABALONE SHABU-SHABU!
THIS IS WHAT'S USED IN CHINA WHEN EATING SHABU-SHABU.
LOOK, THIS NET ISN'T FOR SCOOPING TOFU.

I INTEND TO DEVOTE MYSELF TO THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE TAMAGAWA GROUP.
TOGETHER WITH MY SISTER YUKO, MY UNCLES, AND EVERYONE IN THE FAMILY,
AT THE SAME TIME, HE HAS INSTRUCTED ME TO DISTRIBUTE THE INHERITANCE SO THAT EVERY FAMILY MEMBER IS SATISFIED.
IN HIS WILL, MY FATHER HAS DESIGNATED ME AS THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY.
LET US ALL, AS A FAMILY, RALLY AROUND KUNIO AND SUPPORT HIM!
TO GO THROUGH SUCH HARDSHIP TO RECREATE THESE DELICIOUS DISHES IS THE GREATEST ACT OF FILIAL PIETY TO YOUR LATE FATHER!
MY, KUNIO, YOU'VE TRULY GROWN INTO A FINE MAN!
21

MY, WHAT MAGNIFICENT ABALONE!
I WONDER WHO IT WAS THAT SAID IT WOULD BE WORTH WAY MORE THAN A HUNDRED THOUSAND OR A MILLION YEN...?
THE TAMAGAWA FAMILY GAVE THIS TO US AS A THANK-YOU FOR OUR HELP.
AND WHO WAS IT THAT SAID THERE'D BE PLENTY TO GO AROUND...?
WHOA.
22
STOP MESSING AROUND, IT'S MINE!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? IT'S MINE!
I'M TAKING THIS!
YOU HAVE TO BE THIS STINGY IF YOU EVER WANT TO SAVE UP MONEY.
90

第5話
親子のきずな

I WONDER IF THE BABY IS HERE YET?
IT'S BEEN A WEEK SINCE MRS. MITANI WENT ON MATERNITY LEAVE.
STILL NOTHING FROM YOUR END?
UNFORTUNATELY, NOT YET...
BABIES ARE OFTEN BORN LATER THAN THE DUE DATE.
2
I UNDERSTOOD THAT YOU MEANT NO HARM.
DON'T WORRY, DEPUTY MANAGER.
DEPUTY MANAGER, ASKING QUESTIONS LIKE THAT CONSTITUTES SEXUAL HARASSMENT AGAINST FEMALE EMPLOYEES.
WHAT! BUT I...!

WOULDN'T YOU BE RELIEVED? YOU DID TELL ME THAT THEY WERE THE DEMONS OF THE CULTURAL DEPARTMENT...
IF MRS. ARAKAWA GOES ON MATERNITY LEAVE FOLLOWING MRS. MITANI,
WHAT?!
HMPH, HOW NAIVE.
YA... YAMAOKA —! YOU BASTARD!
TOMII!!!!
OH, HOW AWFUL!
3
WHAT FLOOR IS TOZAI TV ON?!
EXCUSE ME FOR A MOMENT!

THAT MY SON HAS BEEN BORN!
I WANT TO BROADCAST IT TO ALL OF JAPAN!
OH, MR. MITANI!
岩倉産婦人科
YOU DID IT!
バンザーイ
KYAA, CONGRATULATIONS!
4
YES, WE NAMED HIM YUICHI.
HAVE YOU DECIDED ON A NAME YET?

MS. MITANI, IT'S TIME FOR BREASTFEEDING.
I WANT THEM TO GROW UP TO BE SOMEONE WHO IS NOT ONLY TALENTED, BUT KIND-HEARTED AS WELL.
STAY STRONG.
FINALLY, YOUR LIFE AS A MOTHER BEGINS.
I'M GOING TO DO MY BEST!
IT SHOULD BE ANY MOMENT NOW...
IS IT NOT TIME YET...?

HE MUST HAVE GROWN QUITE A BIT BY NOW!
OH!

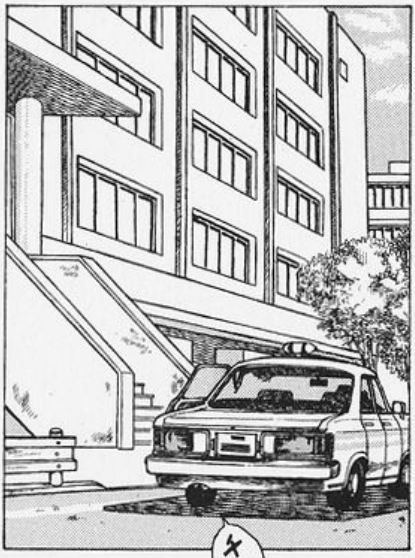
THE MITANI'S ARE BRINGING YUICHI-KUN OVER. THEY'RE STOPPING BY ON THEIR WAY BACK FROM THE SHRINE VISIT.
WHAT ARE YOU ACTING SO RESTLESS FOR?

WHAT, AM I SOME KIND OF GERM?!

YAMAOKA, GET OUT. HAVING SOMEONE AS FILTHY AS YOU AROUND ISN'T GOOD FOR THE BABY.

6

DEAR, I'M OUT OF MONEY...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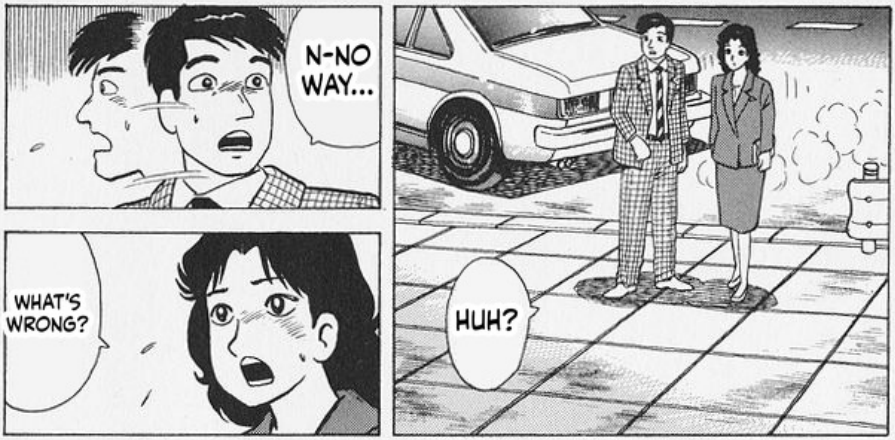
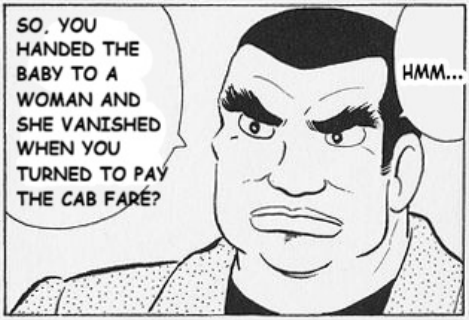
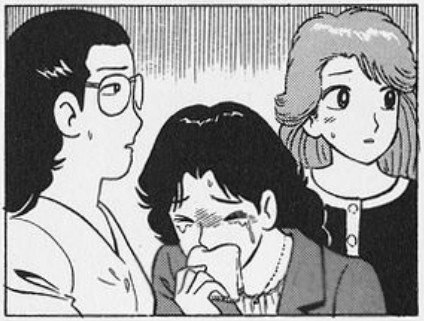
SHALL I HOLD THE BABY FOR YOU?
I CAN'T EVEN GET MY WALLET OUT...
BUT WITH BOTH HANDS FULL...
AH, RIGHT...
SORRY, COULD YOU HOLD HIM FOR A SECOND?
7
THANK YOU, DRIVER.
OH, WHAT A CUTE BABY!
THERE WE GO, JUST FOR A BIT WITH THIS KIND PERSON...
WHERE'S YUICHI?

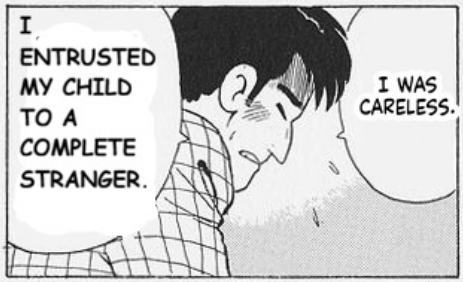

N-NO WAY...
WHAT'S WRONG?
HUH?

I DIDN'T SEE ANYONE...
NO.
DID YOU SEE A WOMAN HOLDING A BABY?!

HONEY! WHERE'S YUICHI?!


SO, YOU HANDED THE BABY TO A WOMAN AND SHE VANISHED WHEN YOU TURNED TO PAY THE CAB FARE?
HMM...




I ENTRUSTED MY CHILD TO A COMPLETE STRANGER.
I WAS CARELESS.

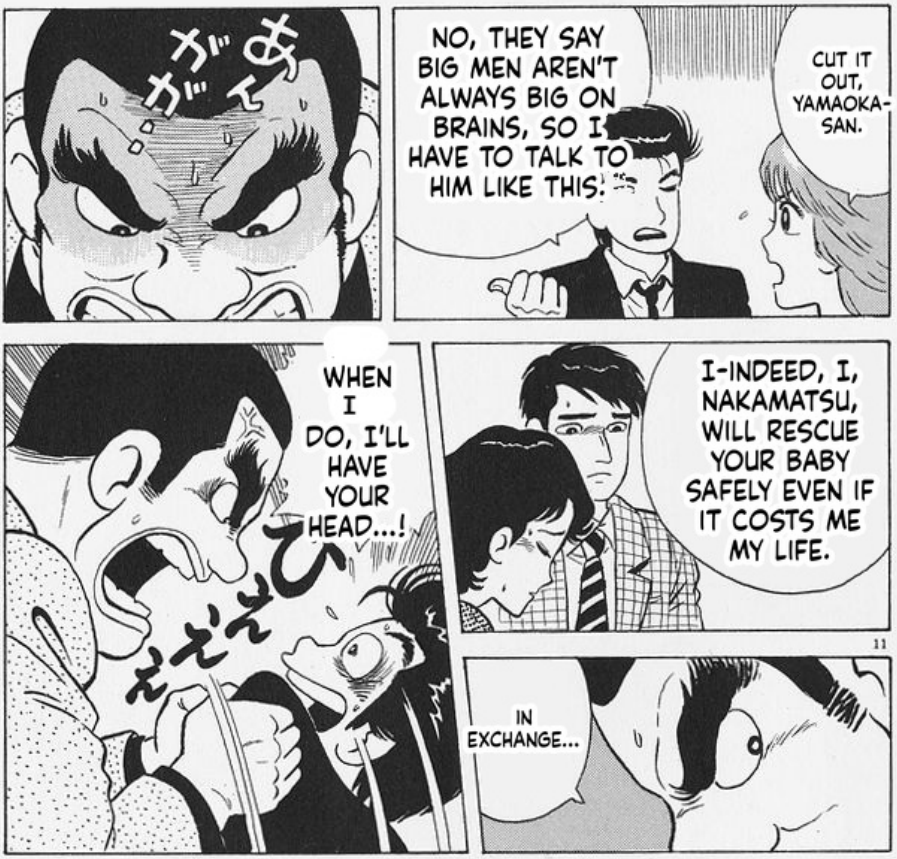
HOW AWFUL...

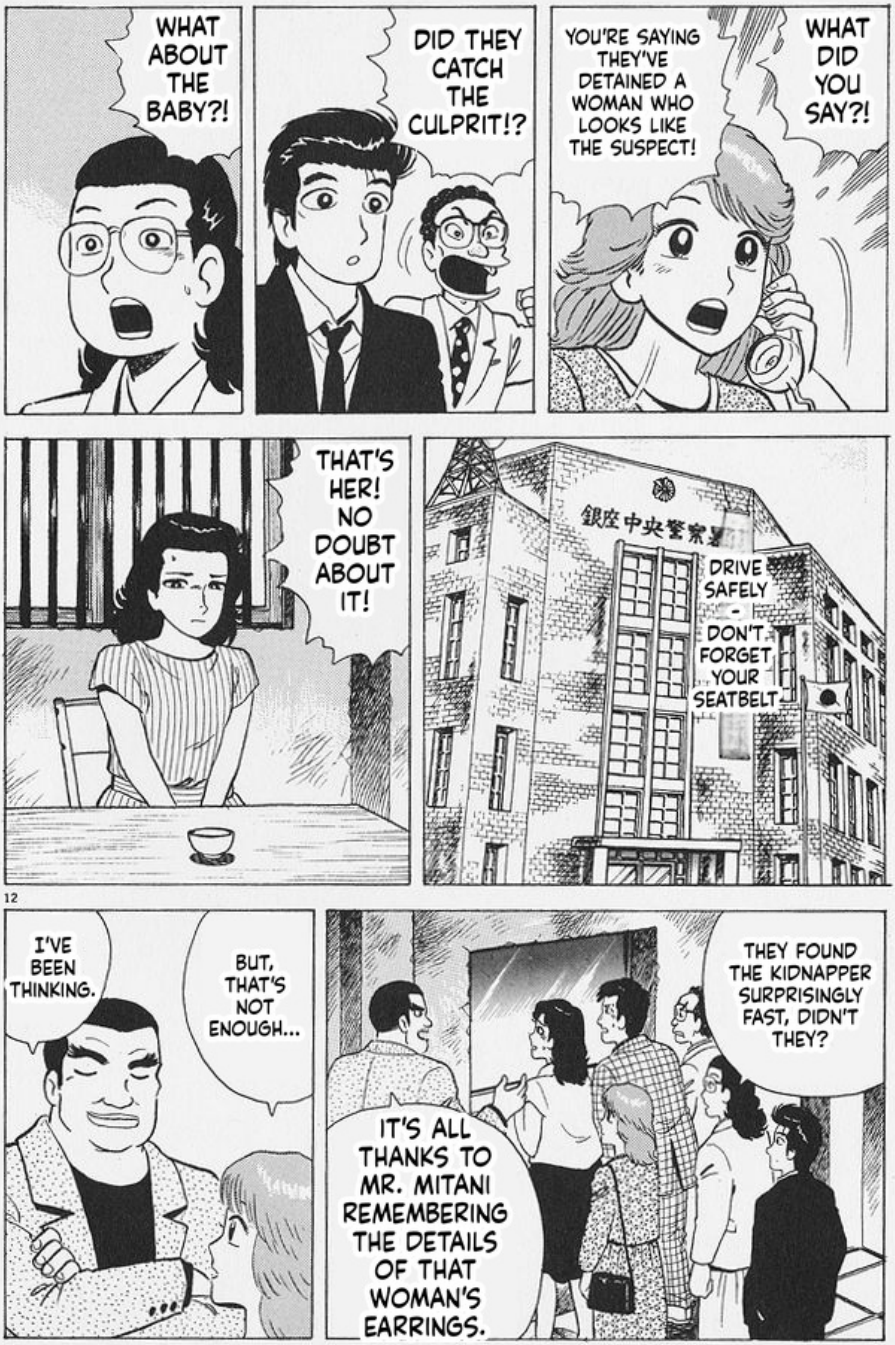
9

IT'S MY FAULT, IF ONLY I HAD BEEN HOLDING HIM WHEN I GOT OUT...

THERE'S NOTHING MORE PAINFUL THAN THIS!
DAMMIT, PUT YOURSELF IN A PARENT'S SHOES!

GO ON.
WAIT! I REMEMBER SOMETHING!
GOOD GRIEF, NO CLUES AT ALL, HUH...
YOU DON'T SEE IT MUCH ON JAPANESE PEOPLE.
IT'S NOT UNUSUAL FOR FOREIGNERS TO HAVE TWO OR THREE PIERCINGS IN ONE EAR, BUT...
SHE HAD GOLD STAR-SHAPED PIERCINGS!
THAT WOMAN HAD PIERCINGS. AND SHE HAD TWO IN ONE EAR!
10
OR SMASH YOUR OWN HEAD IN WITH A WOODEN SWORD.
IF YOU CAN'T RESCUE THEM, COMMIT HARA-KIRI!
UGH...
BUT IF THAT'S ALL WE HAVE TO GO ON...
MAKE SURE YOU RESCUE THAT BABY SAFELY.
INSPECTOR NAKAMATSU, YOU CAN'T JUST SPEND ALL YOUR TIME DOING KENDO, YOU KNOW.


ガーン
NO, THEY SAY BIG MEN AREN'T ALWAYS BIG ON BRAINS, SO I HAVE TO TALK TO HIM LIKE THIS.
CUT IT OUT, YAMAOKA-SAN.
WHEN I DO, I'LL HAVE YOUR HEAD...!
ひえええ
I-INDEED, I, NAKAMATSU, WILL RESCUE YOUR BABY SAFELY EVEN IF IT COSTS ME MY LIFE.
11
IN EXCHANGE...
OH, INSPECTOR NAKAMATSU...


WHAT ABOUT THE BABY?!
DID THEY CATCH THE CULPRIT!?
YOU'RE SAYING THEY'VE DETAINED A WOMAN WHO LOOKS LIKE THE SUSPECT!
WHAT DID YOU SAY?!
THAT'S HER! NO DOUBT ABOUT IT!
銀座中央警察署
DRIVE SAFELY - DON'T FORGET YOUR SEATBELT
12
I'VE BEEN THINKING.
BUT, THAT'S NOT ENOUGH...
IT'S ALL THANKS TO MR. MITANI REMEMBERING THE DETAILS OF THAT WOMAN'S EARRINGS.
THEY FOUND THE KIDNAPPER SURPRISINGLY FAST, DIDN'T THEY?

I HAD THEM CHECK IF A WOMAN WITH A STAR-SHAPED EARRING HAD BEEN THERE.
SO, I PUT OUT A REQUEST TO EVERY POLICE STATION AND BOX IN THE METROPOLITAN AREA TO COMB THROUGH EVERY STORE SELLING CHILDCARE PRODUCTS.
THE FIRST THINGS A WOMAN WHO'S KIDNAPPED A BABY NEEDS ARE CLOTHES, FORMULA, DIAPERS, AND THE LIKE.

うおっほん

I'D PREFER YOU SAVE THE ARROGANCE FOR AFTER WE'VE SAFELY RESCUED YUICHI-KUN.
WHAT ARE YOU GETTING SO COCKY FOR?

THAT'S HOW SHE WAS FOUND SO EASILY.
ASIDE FROM THE PIERCING IN HER EAR, BUYING EVERYTHING FROM UNDERGARMENTS TO BOTTLES AND DIAPERS ALL AT ONCE LEAVES AN IMPRESSION ON SHOPKEEPERS.
AS EXPECTED OF A FAMOUS INSPECTOR!

13

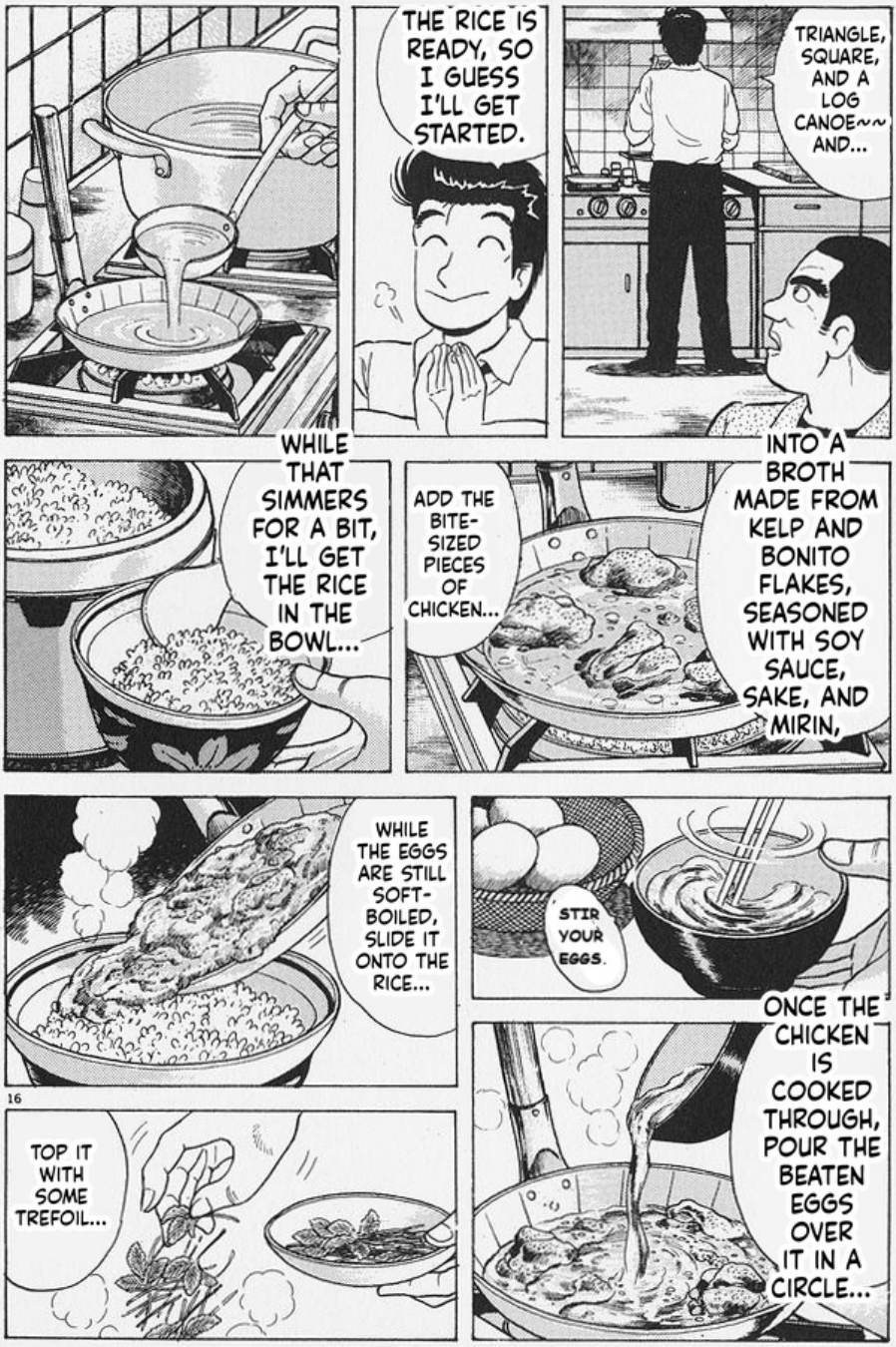
LEAVE IT TO ME!

NAKAMATSU-SAN, PLEASE!
PLEASE, AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE...!

NGAGABU...

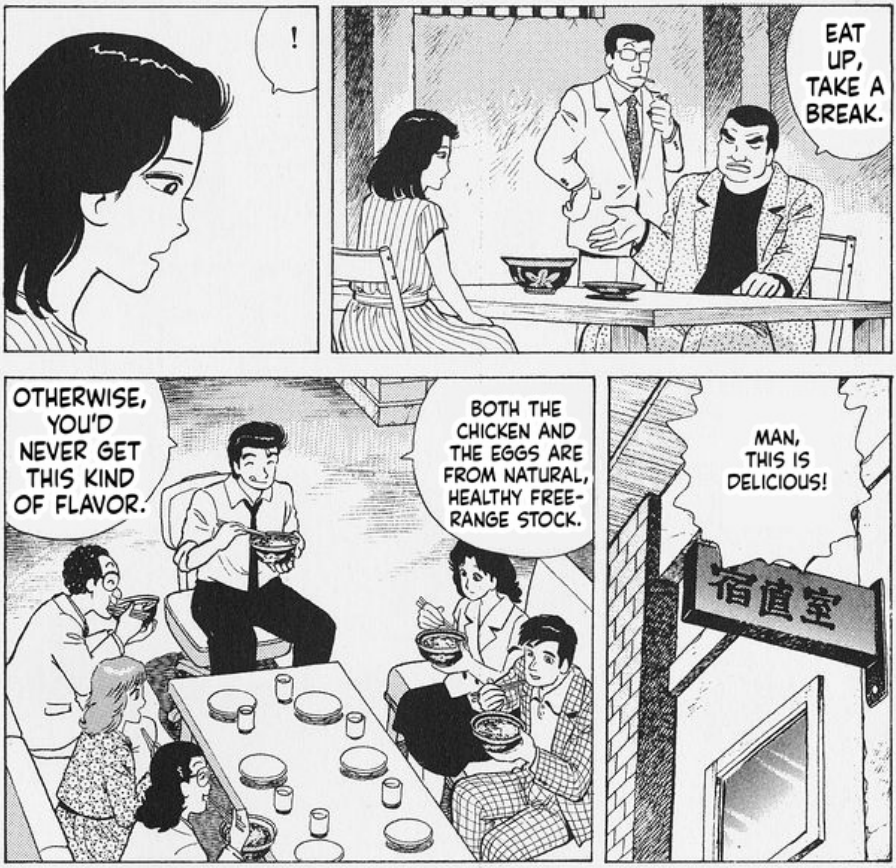
DUTY ROOM
SHE'S QUITE STUBBORN, IT SEEMS EVEN THE DETECTIVES ARE HAVING A HARD TIME WITH HER...
NO...
WHERE IS YUICHI?
DID SHE TALK?!
14
HOW INSENSITIVE!
AT A TIME LIKE THIS!
I'M... HUNGRY —
WELL...

GEEZ...
I'M GOING TO GO GET SOME FOOD.
YOU CAN'T FIGHT ON AN EMPTY STOMACH, AS THEY SAY.
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
ENOUGH ALREADY, WHY DON'T YOU JUST SPIT IT OUT AND STOP MAKING THIS DIFFICULT!
THIS IS JUST GETTING US NOWHERE...
GOOD GRIEF, I'M BEAT...
AH...
15
...?...
HAA
HAA

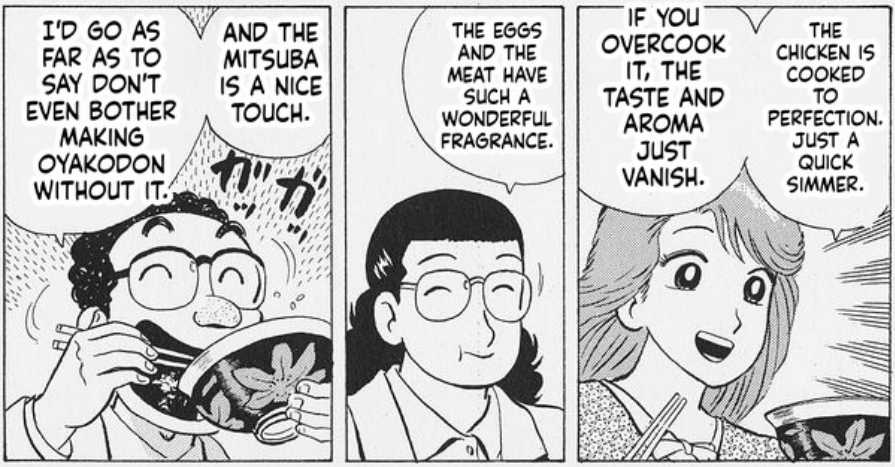

THE RICE IS READY, SO I GUESS I'LL GET STARTED.
TRIANGLE, SQUARE, AND A LOG CANOE~~ AND...
WHILE THAT SIMMERS FOR A BIT, I'LL GET THE RICE IN THE BOWL...
ADD THE BITE-SIZED PIECES OF CHICKEN...
INTO A BROTH MADE FROM KELP AND BONITO FLAKES, SEASONED WITH SOY SAUCE, SAKE, AND MIRIN,
WHILE THE EGGS ARE STILL SOFT-BOILED, SLIDE IT ONTO THE RICE...
STIR YOUR EGGS.
ONCE THE CHICKEN IS COOKED THROUGH, POUR THE BEATEN EGGS OVER IT IN A CIRCLE...
TOP IT WITH SOME TREFOIL...

16

LET'S EAT!
WHOA, LOOKS MAGNIFICENT!
RIGHT! ONE BOWL OF CHICKEN AND EGG OVER RICE, COMING UP!
YOU'RE A PUBLIC SERVANT; WHAT ARE YOU DOING DIGGING IN FIRST?
ピシャ
W-W-W-W-WHY YOU!
EVEN A KIDNAPPER IS HUMAN. AFTER A BRUTAL INTERROGATION BY THOSE DEMON-LIKE COPS, SHE MUST BE STARVING.
THIS PORTION IS FOR THAT LADY.
WHAT! YOU'RE GOING TO LET A WOMAN LIKE THAT EAT THIS?


!
EAT UP, TAKE A BREAK.
OTHERWISE, YOU'D NEVER GET THIS KIND OF FLAVOR.
BOTH THE CHICKEN AND THE EGGS ARE FROM NATURAL, HEALTHY FREE-RANGE STOCK.
MAN, THIS IS DELICIOUS!
宿直室

18


I'D GO AS FAR AS TO SAY DON'T EVEN BOTHER MAKING OYAKODON WITHOUT IT.
AND THE MITSUBA IS A NICE TOUCH.
ガツガツ
THE EGGS AND THE MEAT HAVE SUCH A WONDERFUL FRAGRANCE.
IF YOU OVERCOOK IT, THE TASTE AND AROMA JUST VANISH.
THE CHICKEN IS COOKED TO PERFECTION. JUST A QUICK SIMMER.

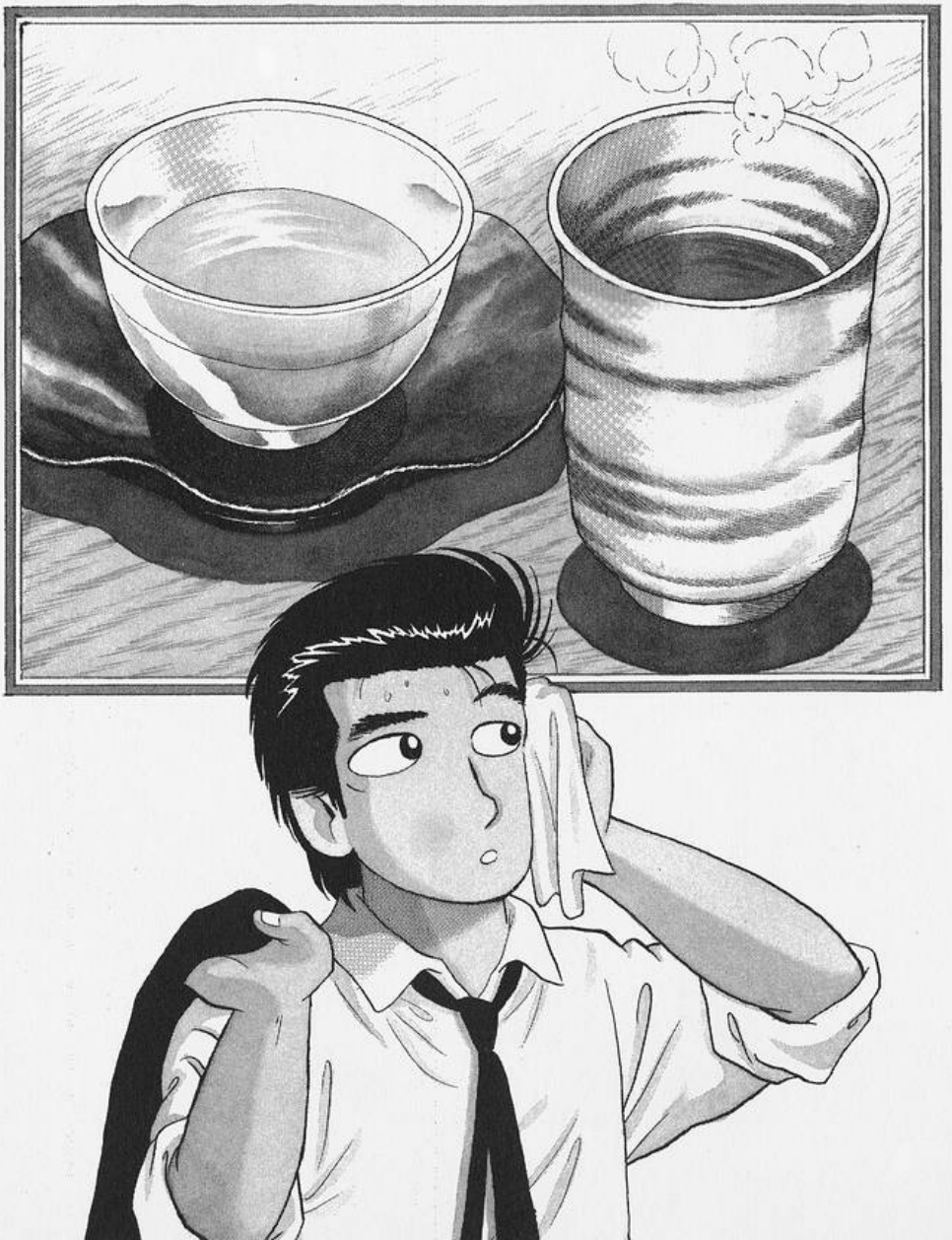
THANK YOU, YAMAOKA-SAN. THANKS TO YOU, I'M FEELING BETTER.
NOT AT ALL, NOT AT ALL.
I'M GLAD, NORIKO. EVEN WHEN YOU'RE FEELING DOWN, YOU CAN STILL EAT THIS.
IT'S DELICIOUS...
OYAKODON... YOU'VE SERVED ME SOMETHING QUITE IRONIC, HAVEN'T YOU...?
GOOD, ISN'T IT? MY PAL MADE IT.
EH? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
WH-WHAT'S WRONG? COME ON, EAT UP.

THOSE DAYS FEEL LIKE A DREAM NOW...
MY FATHER AND MOTHER GOT ALONG SO WELL, WE WERE VERY HAPPY...
MY FATHER RAN A DINER, AND HIS SPECIALTY WAS OYAKODON.
I SEE.
20
SINCE I HAVE SUCH BAD LUCK WITH MEN, I THOUGHT AT LEAST THE CHILD AND I COULD HAVE A HAPPY HOME...
I WANTED A CHILD SO BADLY...
I DREAMED OF A HAPPY HOME LIKE I USED TO HAVE, BUT I FAILED AT MARRIAGE TWICE...
MY FATHER AND MOTHER DIED ONE AFTER ANOTHER, AND I WAS ALL ALONE.
I COULDN'T HAVE CHILDREN. THAT'S WHY MY MARRIAGES FAILED...
I FORGOT THAT JUST AS MY PARENTS LOVED ME, THAT BABY'S PARENTS LOVE THEM TOO...
I'M A TERRIBLE WOMAN, FORGETTING THE OBVIOUS FACT THAT EVEN THAT BABY HAS PARENTS...

NOT AFTER I TRIED TO TEAR A PARENT AND CHILD APART...
I HAVE NO RIGHT TO EAT THIS OYAKODON,
IT TASTES EXACTLY LIKE THE OYAKODON MY FATHER USED TO MAKE...
THIS OYAKODON IS DELICIOUS... IT'S SUCH A GENTLE, COMFORTING TASTE...
21
YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO EAT IT.
JUST SHUT UP AND EAT.
SHE APPARENTLY EVEN HIRED A BABYSITTER WHENEVER SHE WENT OUT...
東西新聞社
THAT WOMAN TOOK VERY GOOD CARE OF YUICHI.

HEY, YAMAOKA!
HMM, WOULDN'T THE CHILD HAVE BEEN BETTER OFF IF YOU'D JUST LEFT THEM WITH THAT WOMAN?
THAT'S NOT FUNNY!
AH, HAHAHA...
YOU HAD PLENTY TO SAY -CALLED ME A BRAINLESS STICK-SWINGER, SAID BIG MEN LACK BIG WITS, AND ALL THAT.
22
ガブ ガブ
OFFICER! HELP! A THUG IS ATTACKING ME...!
YOU'RE GOING TO PAY FOR THOSE INSULTS, YOU HEAR?
BUT NOW THAT I'VE SUCCESSFULLY RESCUED THE BABY,
NOW, WAIT, I MEAN...

第6話
灼熱のお茶



WHOA, IT'S HOT!
東西新聞社
YIKES! SEE YA LATER!
IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE IT'LL BE FIXED TODAY.
WHAT'S WITH THIS HEAT INSIDE THE OFFICE?!
I HEARD THE AIR CONDITIONING UNIT BROKE DOWN.
2
I'M GOING TO DO MY WORK AT THE CAFE.
I'M GOING TO A CAFE WITH AC TO COOL OFF...
HEY, YAMAOKA! WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?!

OH MY! TO HAVE THE DIRECTOR MAKE TEA FOR US...
I HAVE TO LET MYSELF DO THIS ONCE IN A WHILE.

KURITA-KUN, WOULD YOU LIKE SOME TEA?
あたたたたたっ

MY, THIS ROASTED GREEN TEA IS HOT ENOUGH TO BURN MY TONGUE.

WELL THEN, DON'T MIND IF I DO.

3

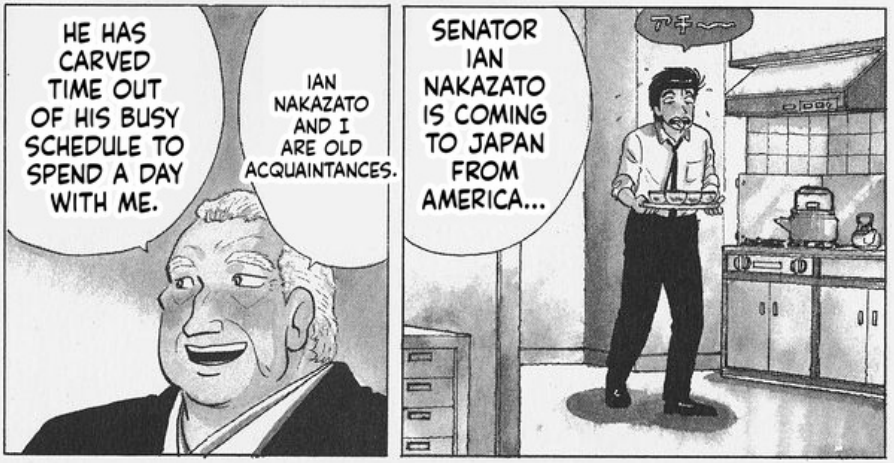
THIS IS ONE WAY TO BEAT THE SUMMER HEAT.
INDEED, CONSUMING HOT THINGS WHEN IT'S HOT.

IN THIS SAUNA-LIKE HEAT, THIS IS ACTUALLY MORE REFRESHING AND PLEASANT THAN A COLD DRINK.

CAN I HAVE SOME TOO?

I HAVE SOME WORK TO...
YAMAOKA, KURITA,
WHY DON'T YOU MAKE ENOUGH FOR EVERYONE?
HEY YAMAOKA, I BET THE OTHERS WANT SOME TOO.
OH, IS THAT SO? MY APOLOGIES.
AH, CHAIRMAN OHARA, YAMAOKA WAS JUST ABOUT TO MAKE SOME TEA. PLEASE, HAVE SOME.
ううっ

4


HE HAS CARVED TIME OUT OF HIS BUSY SCHEDULE TO SPEND A DAY WITH ME.
IAN NAKAZATO AND I ARE OLD ACQUAINTANCES.
SENATOR IAN NAKAZATO IS COMING TO JAPAN FROM AMERICA...
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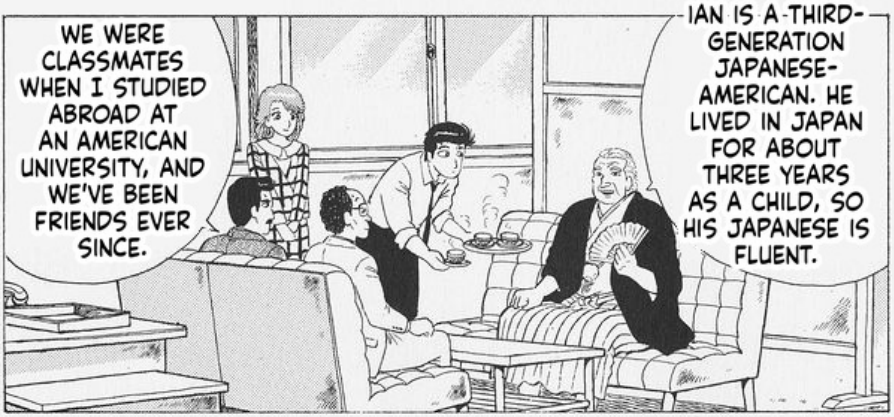
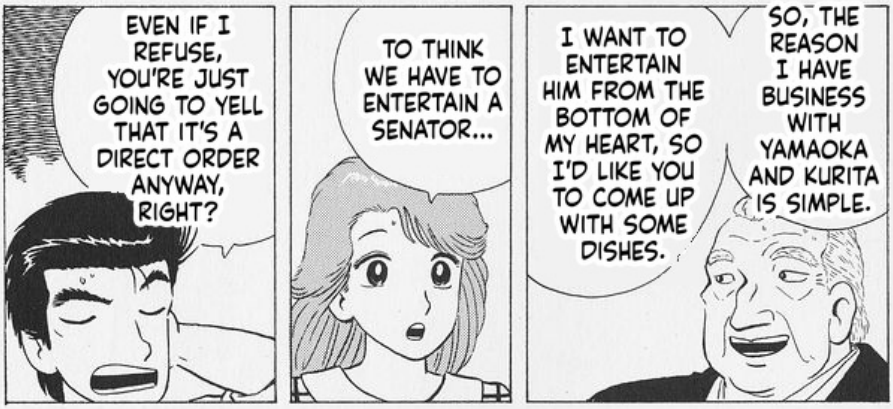
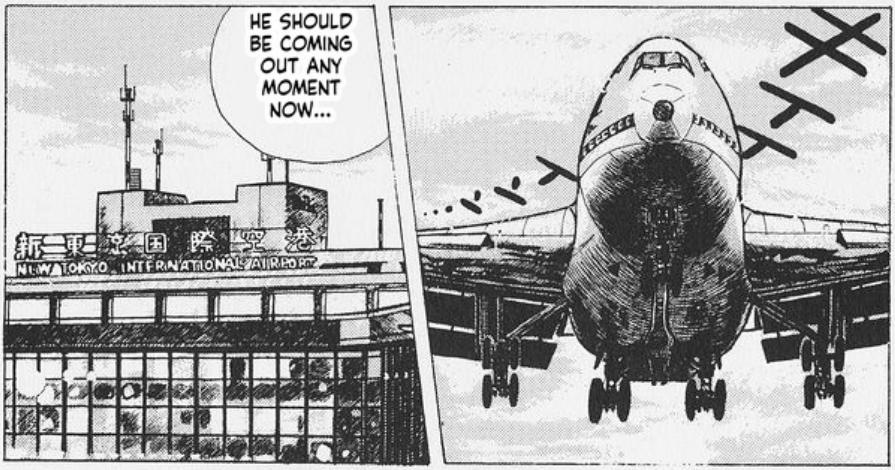

WE WERE CLASSMATES WHEN I STUDIED ABROAD AT AN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY, AND WE'VE BEEN FRIENDS EVER SINCE.
IAN IS A THIRD-GENERATION JAPANESE-AMERICAN. HE LIVED IN JAPAN FOR ABOUT THREE YEARS AS A CHILD, SO HIS JAPANESE IS FLUENT.


EVEN IF I REFUSE, YOU'RE JUST GOING TO YELL THAT IT'S A DIRECT ORDER ANYWAY, RIGHT?
TO THINK WE HAVE TO ENTERTAIN A SENATOR...
I WANT TO ENTERTAIN HIM FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART, SO I'D LIKE YOU TO COME UP WITH SOME DISHES.
SO, THE REASON I HAVE BUSINESS WITH YAMAOKA AND KURITA IS SIMPLE.

HEY NOW, DON'T SAY SUCH RECKLESS THINGS. DOGS AND HORSES ARE MUCH MORE USEFUL THAN YOU!
んがが
YOU KNOW ME WELL.
5
BEING WORKED LIKE DOGS OR HORSES...
SIGH... POOR ME...


HE SHOULD BE COMING OUT ANY MOMENT NOW...
新東京国際空港
NEW TOKYO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

OH, IF IT ISN'T OHARA-SAN.

AH? YES, FRIENDS YOU SPENT YOUR STUDENT DAYS WITH ARE A NOSTALGIC THING INDEED.
PRESIDENT OHARA, YOU CERTAINLY SEEM TO BE IN HIGH SPIRITS.

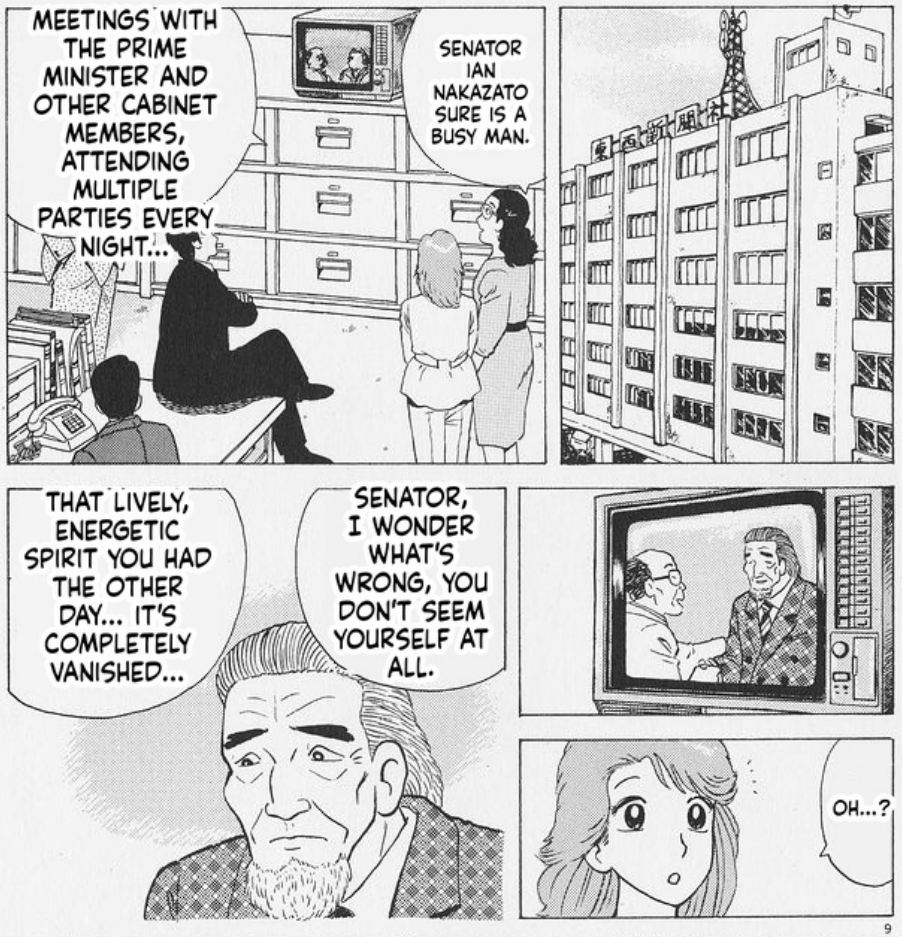
6

MR. NAKAZATO AND I WERE CLASSMATES IN UNIVERSITY...
DO YOU ALSO KNOW HIM...?
COULD IT BE THAT YOU'RE HERE TO MEET SENATOR IAN NAKAZATO?

PRESIDENT MINEYAMA OF THE TEITO NEWSPAPER.

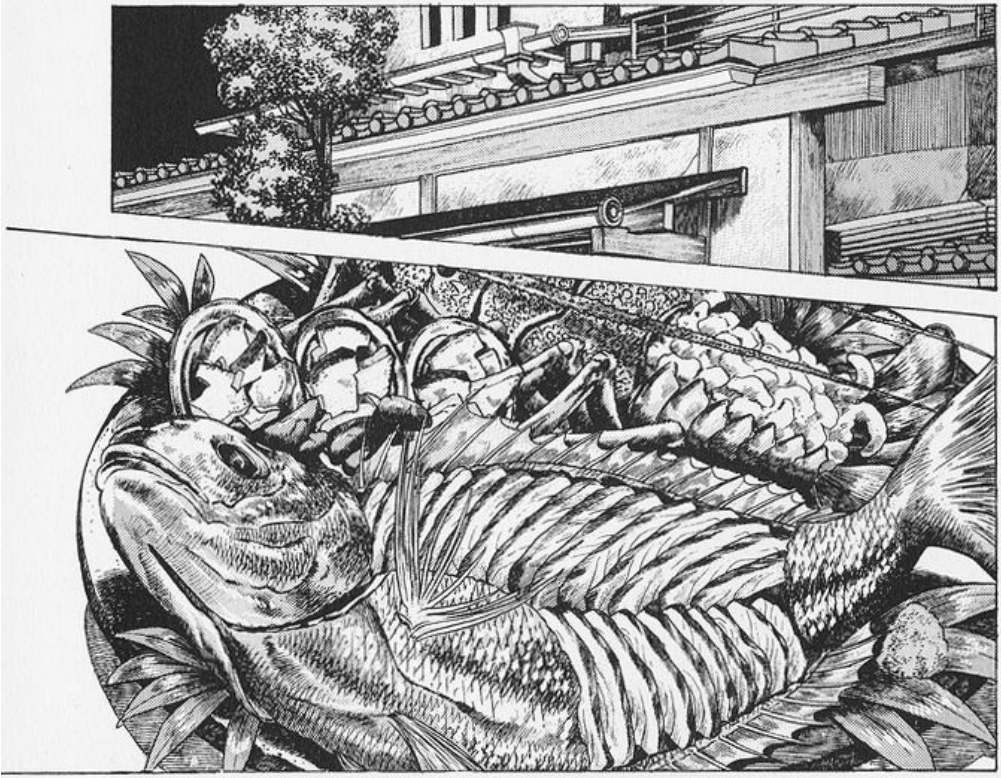
119 *TL NOTE: JUST A FUN BIT OF TRIVIA FOR YOU, THIS SORT OF BEARD IS KNOWN AS A "SHENANDOAH" BEARD AND IT WOULD BE CONSIDERED EXTREMELY ECCENTRIC, AS WOULD HAVING HAIR THIS LONG BELOW YOUR COLLAR. MAKES ME WONDER HOW THIS GUY GOT ELECTED.

I'M DELIGHTED THAT EVERYONE IS HERE FOR ME.
OH, SO YOU'RE THE ONE WHO... IAN...
OHARA-SAN, I'M HOSTING A WELCOMING BANQUET FOR SENATOR NAKAZATO, SO PLEASE ATTEND.
ANTI-JAPANESE SENTIMENT IN AMERICA IS WORSENING; CARE TO COMMENT ON THAT?!
IT SEEMS JAPANESE INVESTMENT IN THE U.S. IS BECOMING AN ISSUE!
SENATOR! WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE JAPAN-U.S. FRICTION?!
THE SENATOR IS CERTAINLY VERY ACTIVE.
HE SEEMS FULL OF ENERGY AND VIGOR.
WE MUST PROCEED WITH THE FUNDAMENTAL PREMISE THAT THE FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN JAPAN AND THE U.S. MUST BE FURTHER STRENGTHENED.
WELL, YOU SEE, THERE ARE VARIOUS ISSUES INVOLVED, BUT-
FIRST, REGARDING THE ISSUE OF JAPAN-U.S. FRICTION...


MEETINGS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AND OTHER CABINET MEMBERS, ATTENDING MULTIPLE PARTIES EVERY NIGHT...
SENATOR IAN NAKAZATO SURE IS A BUSY MAN.
THAT LIVELY, ENERGETIC SPIRIT YOU HAD THE OTHER DAY... IT'S COMPLETELY VANISHED...
SENATOR, I WONDER WHAT'S WRONG, YOU DON'T SEEM YOURSELF AT ALL.
OH...?
9
AH, IT'S SO HOT, SO HOT...
I WONDER IF THAT'S IT...
IT'S THIS TERRIBLE LATE-SUMMER HEAT, DON'T YOU THINK? HE MUST BE EXHAUSTED.

I ABSOLUTELY CANNOT LOSE TO PRESIDENT MINEYAMA.
YAMAOKA, KURITA, I'M COUNTING ON YOU TONIGHT.
TASTE THE FOOD PRESIDENT MINEYAMA SERVES AT HIS BANQUET CAREFULLY, THEN PREPARE SOMETHING EVEN BETTER FOR MY PARTY.
GOOD GRIEF... THERE'S NO NEED TO GET SO WORKED UP OVER WINNING AND LOSING.
THE AIR CONDITIONING ISN'T WORKING AT ALL!
AGH, IT'S SO DAMN HOT.
JUST DO AS YOU'RE TOLD!
SHUT UP! IT'S HOT ENOUGH AS IT IS, DON'T NAG ME WITH YOUR NONSENSE!
YEAH, YEAH, I GET IT!
I DON'T THINK THAT'S WHAT HOSPITALITY IS SUPPOSED TO BE ABOUT...
PRESIDENT OHARA IS DETERMINED TO COMPETE WITH PRESIDENT MINEYAMA...

10



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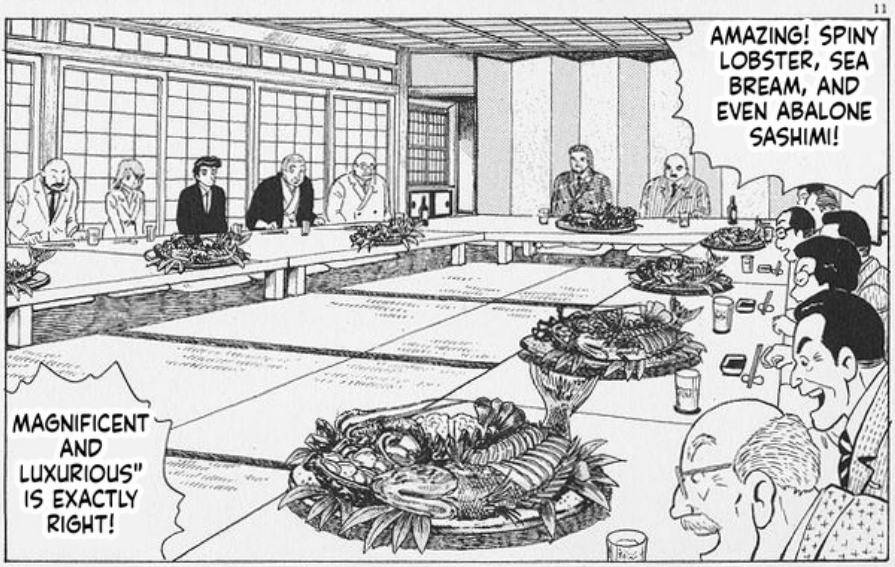
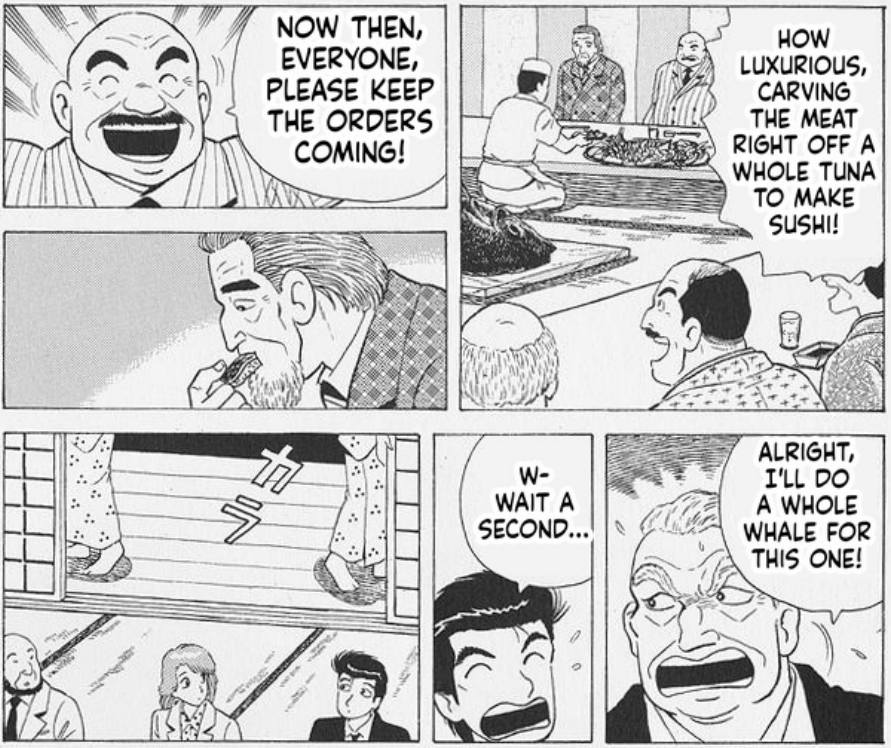
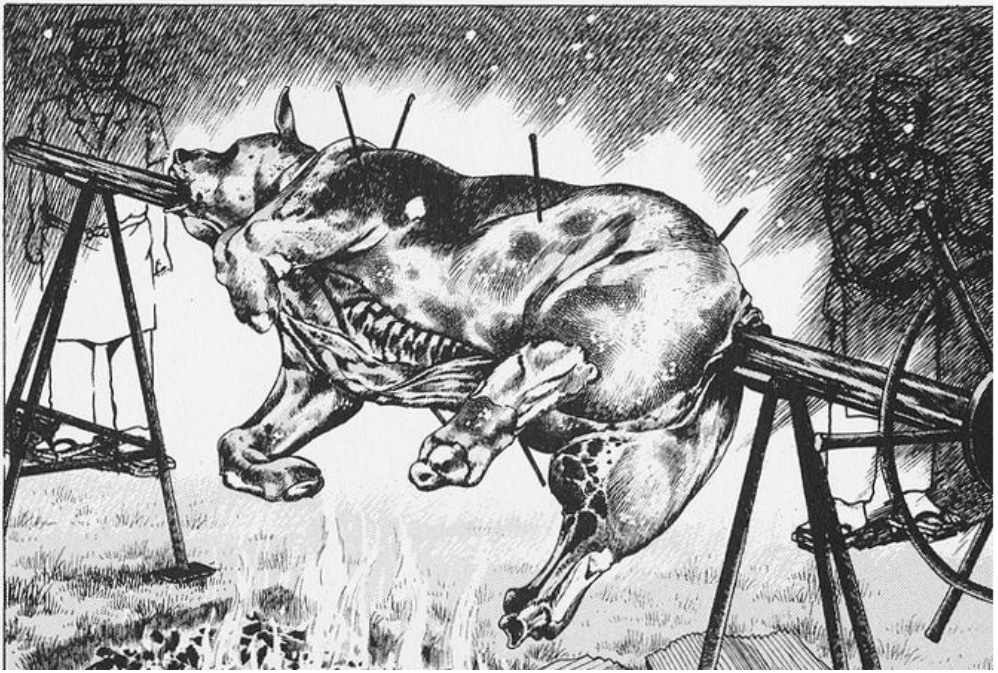

AMAZING! SPINY LOBSTER, SEA BREAM, AND EVEN ABALONE SASHIMI!
MAGNIFICENT AND LUXURIOUS" IS EXACTLY RIGHT!

IT'S GOING TO BE INCREDIBLY DIFFICULT TO FIND ANYTHING BETTER THAN THIS...
PLEASE, ENJOY.
SINCE THE SENATOR IS FOND OF RAW FISH, I'VE HAD THE VERY BEST COLLECTED.
OH, THIS IS MAGNIFICENT...
うおおお
RIGHT, RIGHT.
YAMAOKA, YOU'D BETTER FIND SOMETHING EVEN BETTER THAN THIS.
12
THIS IS BLUEFIN TUNA CAUGHT OFF THE COAST OF KYŪSHU.

HOW EXTRAVAGANT!
WHOA! YOU'RE GOING TO BUTCHER THAT TUNA RIGHT HERE?!
I HEARD YOU WERE FOND OF SUSHI, SENATOR,
SO WE SHALL NOW SERVE YOU SOME HAND-PRESSED TUNA NIGIRI.
WOULD YOU PREFER LEAN TUNA, MEDIUM FATTY TUNA, OR FATTY TUNA?
I'LL HAVE THE MEDIUM FATTY TUNA, THEN...
13

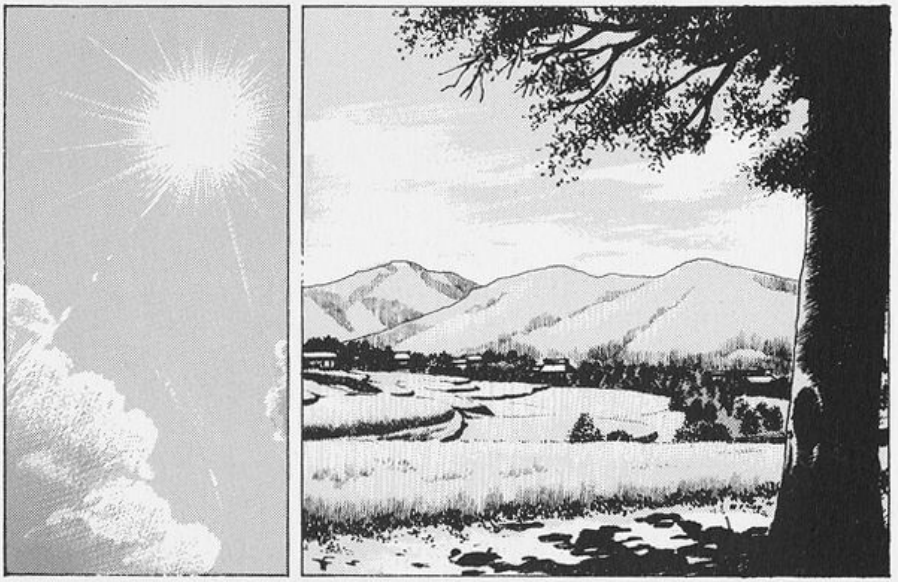

NOW THEN, EVERYONE, PLEASE KEEP THE ORDERS COMING!
HOW LUXURIOUS, CARVING THE MEAT RIGHT OFF A WHOLE TUNA TO MAKE SUSHI!
カラ
W- WAIT A SECOND...
ALRIGHT, I'LL DO A WHOLE WHALE FOR THIS ONE!

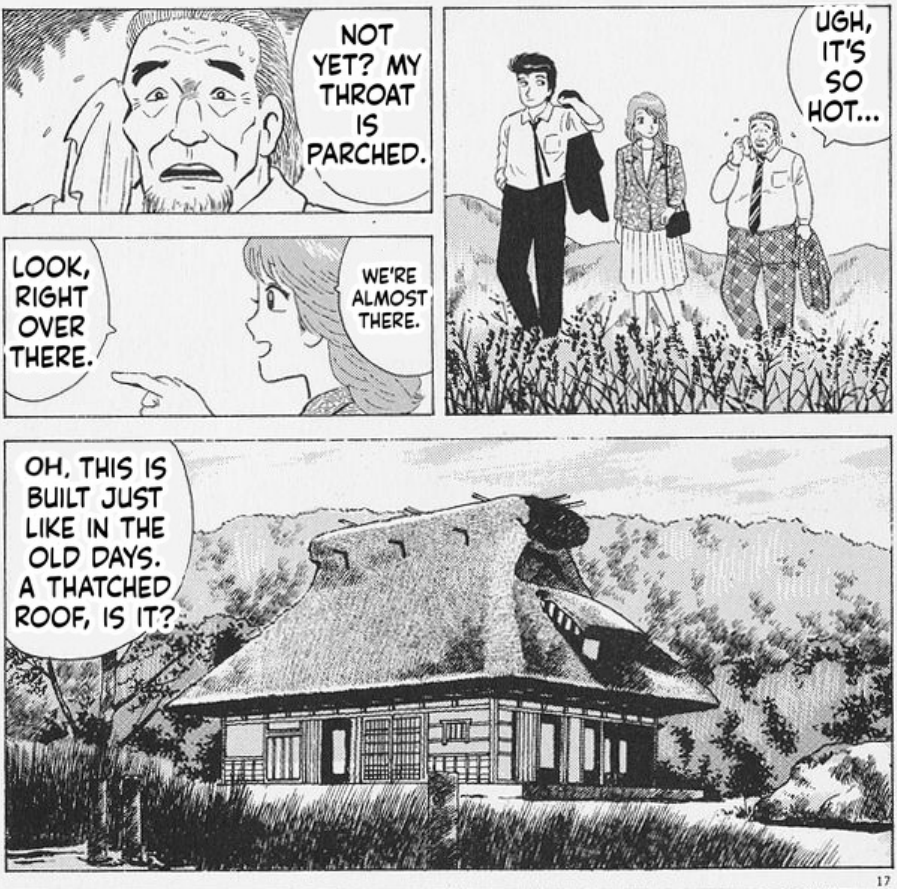


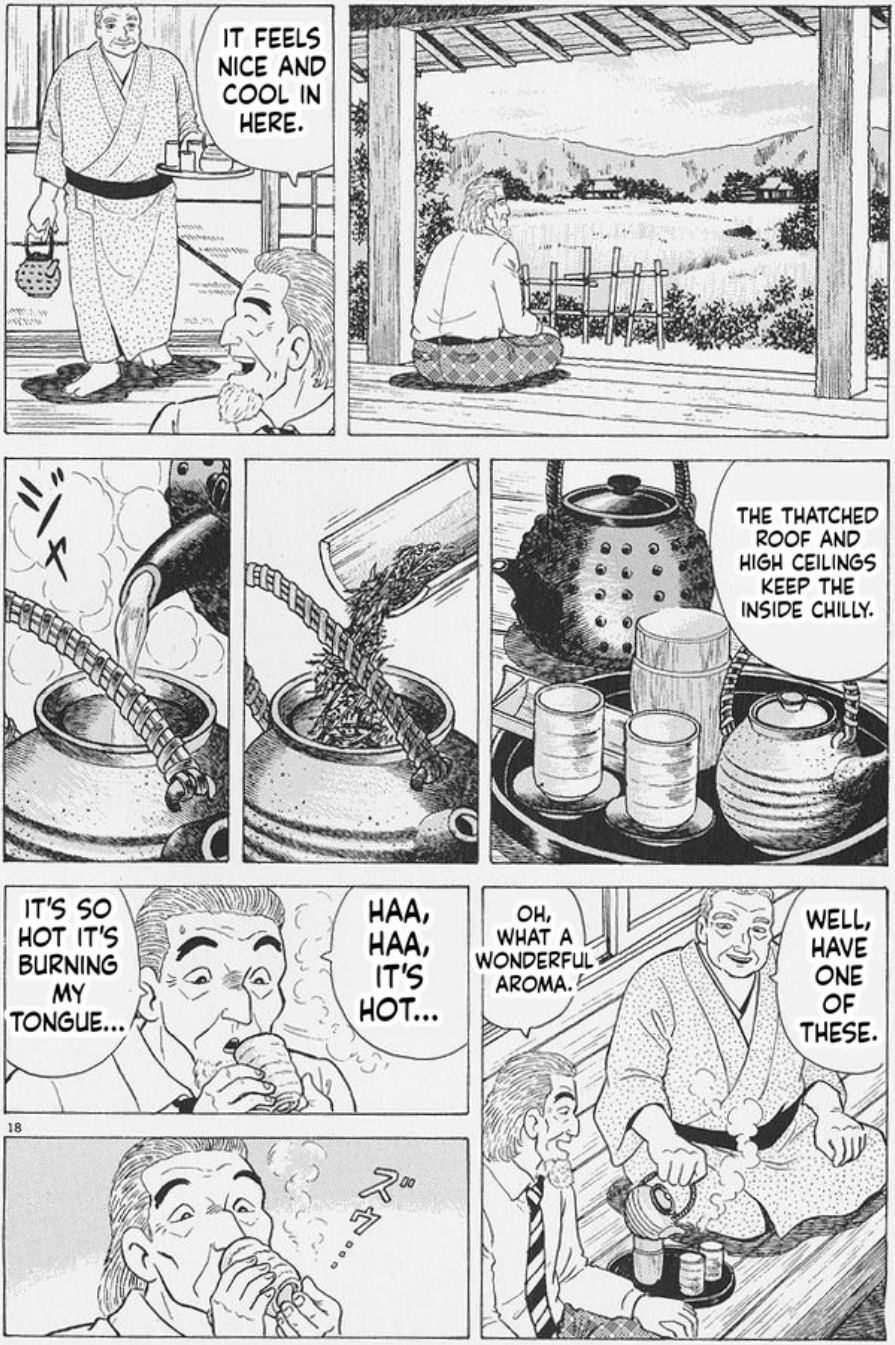
I WANTED THE SENATOR TO TASTE THE VERY BEST BEEF JAPAN HAS TO OFFER.
THIS IS CHOICE WAGYU BEEF, RAISED WITH GREAT CARE FOR OVER THREE YEARS.
IS THAT A WHOLE COW?!
HYAAA -!
PRESIDENT MINEYAMA IS MAKING ONE BOLD MOVE AFTER ANOTHER!
Y-YOU BASTARD!
....
がっはっは
PERHAPS YOU'RE JUST TIRED FROM THE FORCED MARCH...?
MY, MY... YOU DON'T SEEM AS ENERGETIC AS WHEN WE MET AT THE AIRPORT...
PHEEEE
YAMAOKA! GO EVEN MORE LUXURIOUS THAN THAT!
15
PRESIDENT OHARA, PLEASE LOOK AT THE SENATOR'S FACE.

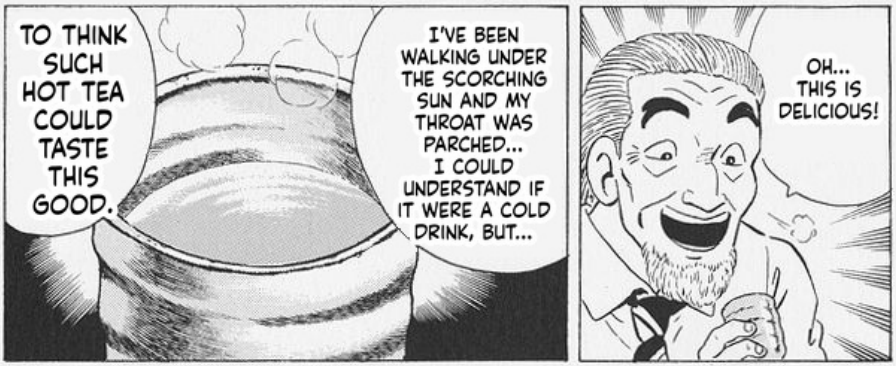
MR. YAMAOKA, ABOUT THE MATTER OF ENTERTAINING THE SENATOR...
HUH?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?
BUT I CAN'T HELP FEELING THERE'S ANOTHER REASON AS WELL.
THAT'S LIKELY PART OF IT TOO.
OH? KURITA, HAVE YOU COME UP WITH A GOOD IDEA?

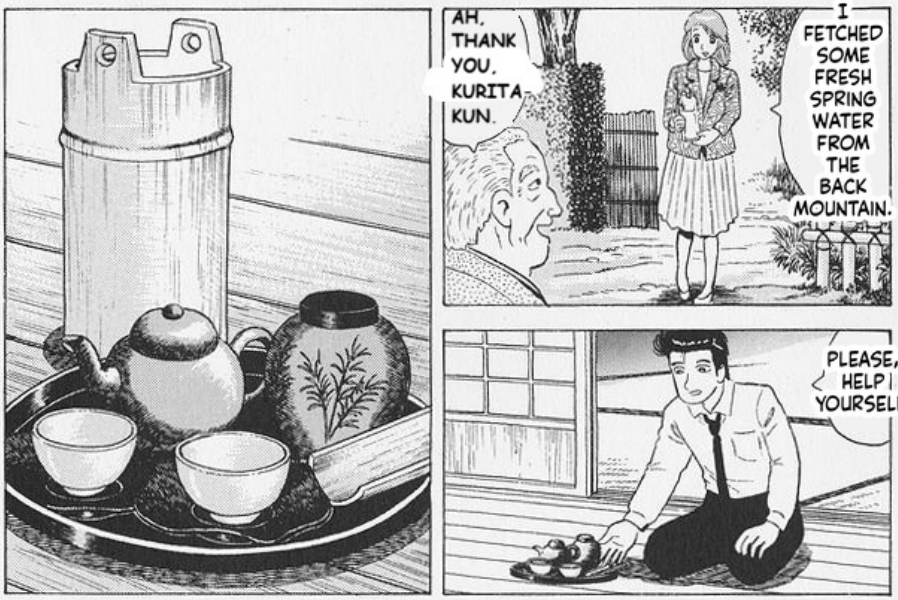
16



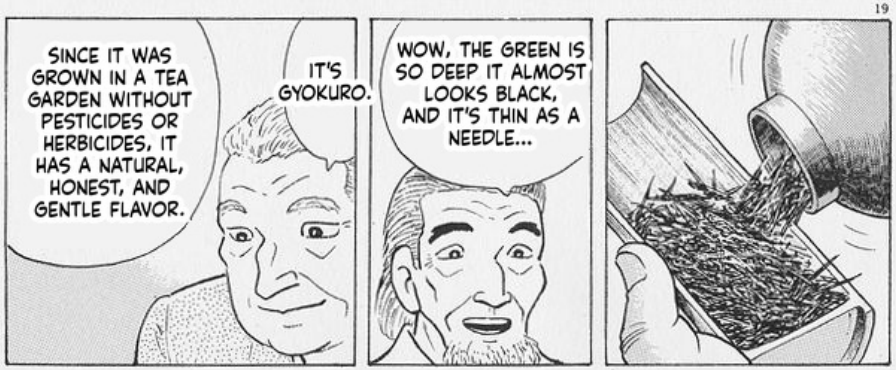

NOT YET? MY THROAT IS PARCHED.
UGH, IT'S SO HOT...
LOOK, RIGHT OVER THERE.
WE'RE ALMOST THERE.
OH, THIS IS BUILT JUST LIKE IN THE OLD DAYS. A THATCHED ROOF, IS IT?
17
HEY IAN, SORRY FOR DRAGGING YOU OUT ALL THIS WAY...
OHARA.

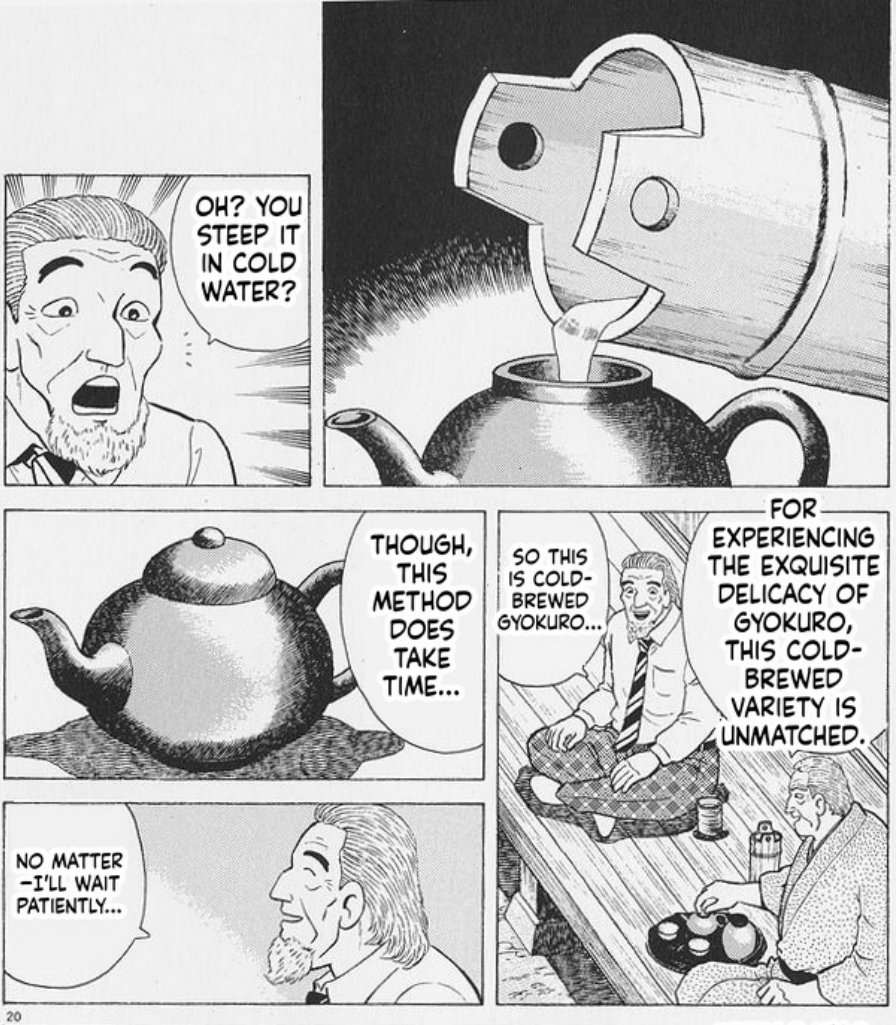

IT FEELS NICE AND COOL IN HERE.
THE THATCHED ROOF AND HIGH CEILINGS KEEP THE INSIDE CHILLY.
WELL, HAVE ONE OF THESE.
OH, WHAT A WONDERFUL AROMA.
HAA, HAA, IT'S HOT...
IT'S SO HOT IT'S BURNING MY TONGUE...
18


TO THINK SUCH HOT TEA COULD TASTE THIS GOOD.
I'VE BEEN WALKING UNDER THE SCORCHING SUN AND MY THROAT WAS PARCHED... I COULD UNDERSTAND IF IT WERE A COLD DRINK, BUT...
OH... THIS IS DELICIOUS!

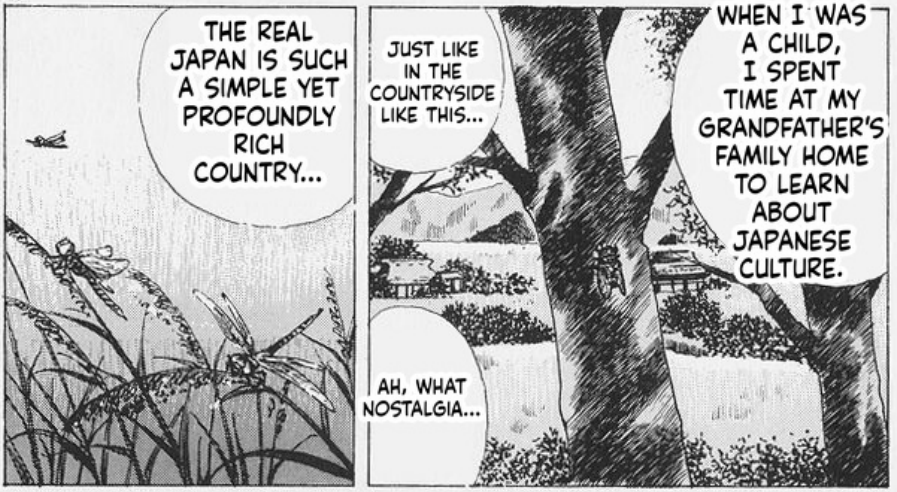

AH, THANK YOU, KURITA-KUN.
I FETCHED SOME FRESH SPRING WATER FROM THE BACK MOUNTAIN.
PLEASE, HELP YOURSELF.

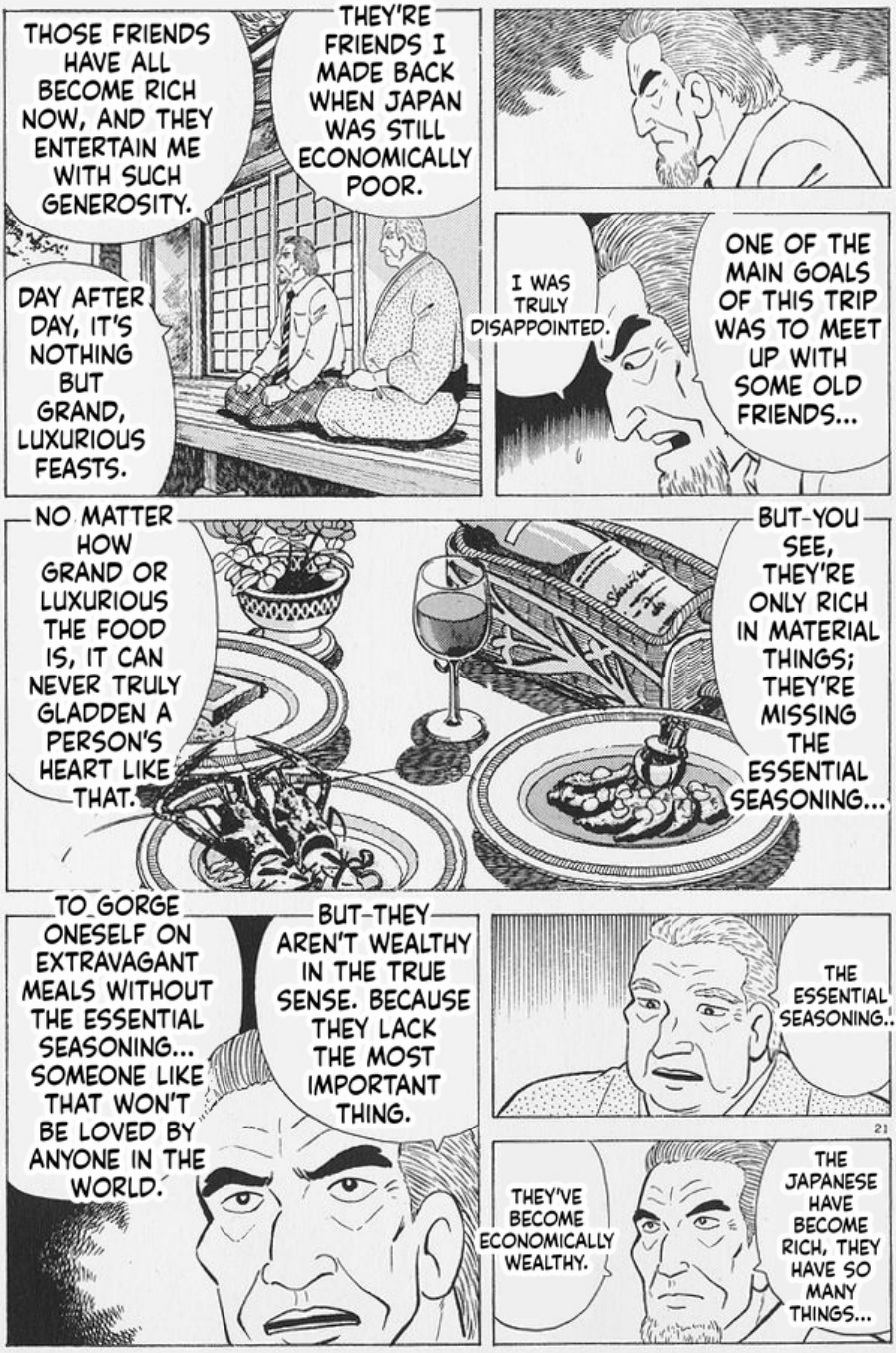
19


SINCE IT WAS GROWN IN A TEA GARDEN WITHOUT PESTICIDES OR HERBICIDES, IT HAS A NATURAL, HONEST, AND GENTLE FLAVOR.
IT'S GYOKURO.
WOW, THE GREEN IS SO DEEP IT ALMOST LOOKS BLACK, AND IT'S THIN AS A NEEDLE...


OH? YOU STEEP IT IN COLD WATER?
THOUGH, THIS METHOD DOES TAKE TIME...
NO MATTER -I'LL WAIT PATIENTLY...
SO THIS IS COLD-BREWED GYOKURO...
FOR EXPERIENCING THE EXQUISITE DELICACY OF GYOKURO, THIS COLD-BREWED VARIETY IS UNMATCHED.

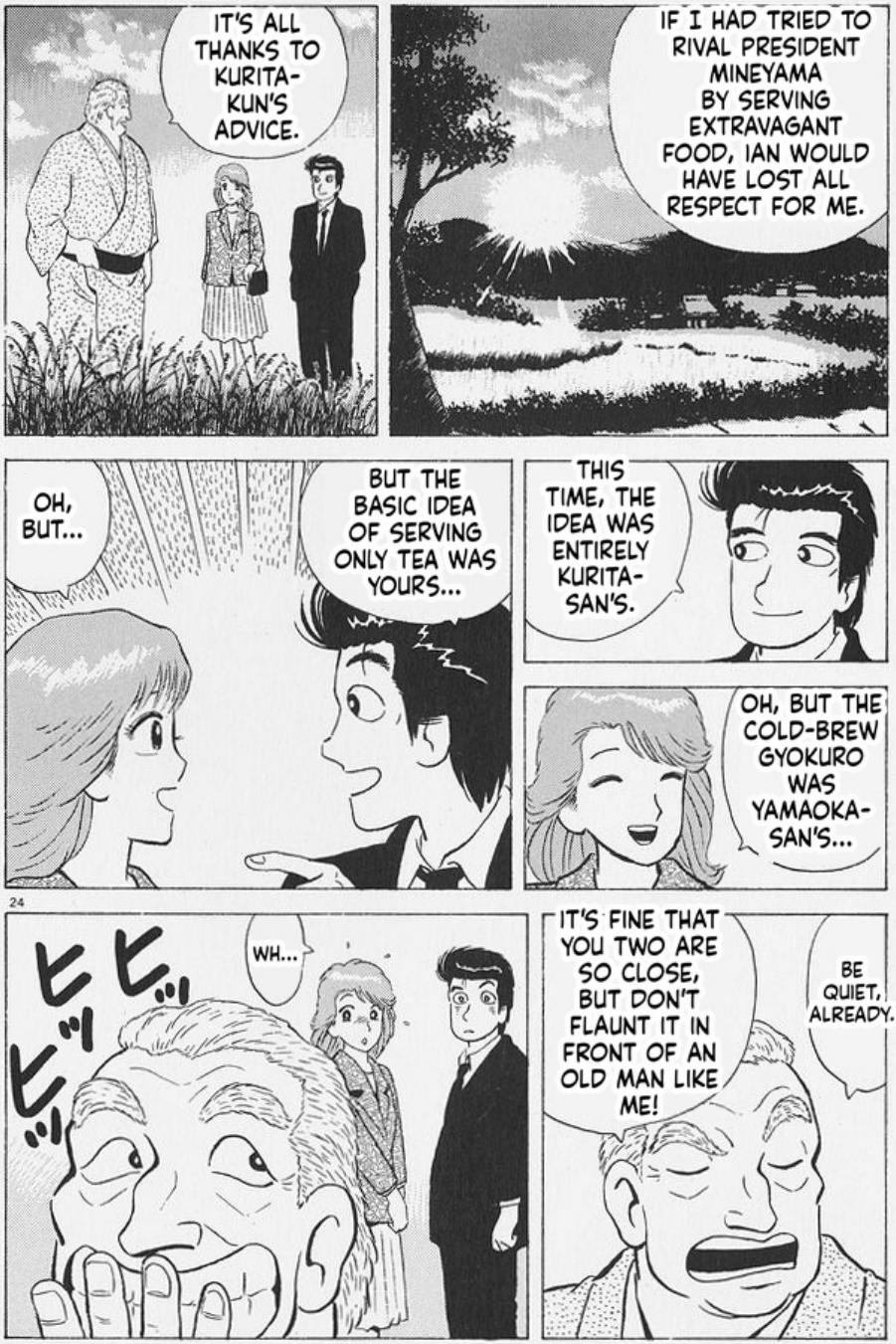
20


THE REAL JAPAN IS SUCH A SIMPLE YET PROFOUNDLY RICH COUNTRY...
JUST LIKE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE LIKE THIS...
AH, WHAT NOSTALGIA...
WHEN I WAS A CHILD, I SPENT TIME AT MY GRANDFATHER'S FAMILY HOME TO LEARN ABOUT JAPANESE CULTURE.

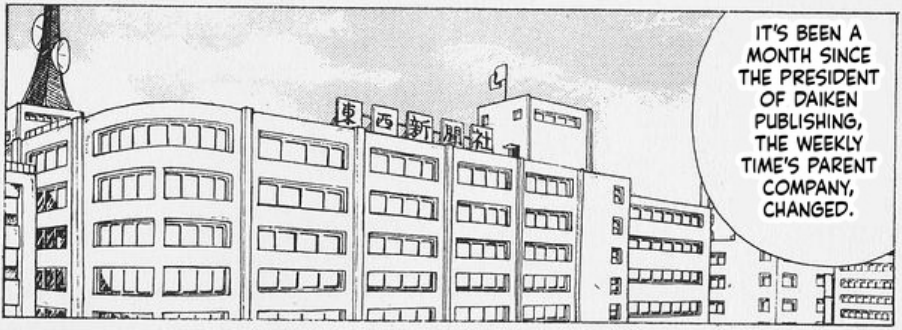

THOSE FRIENDS HAVE ALL BECOME RICH NOW, AND THEY ENTERTAIN ME WITH SUCH GENEROSITY.
THEY'RE FRIENDS I MADE BACK WHEN JAPAN WAS STILL ECONOMICALLY POOR.
DAY AFTER DAY, IT'S NOTHING BUT GRAND, LUXURIOUS FEASTS.
I WAS TRULY DISAPPOINTED.
ONE OF THE MAIN GOALS OF THIS TRIP WAS TO MEET UP WITH SOME OLD FRIENDS...
NO MATTER HOW GRAND OR LUXURIOUS THE FOOD IS, IT CAN NEVER TRULY GLADDEN A PERSON'S HEART LIKE THAT.
BUT-YOU SEE, THEY'RE ONLY RICH IN MATERIAL THINGS; THEY'RE MISSING THE ESSENTIAL SEASONING...
TO GORGE ONESELF ON EXTRAVAGANT MEALS WITHOUT THE ESSENTIAL SEASONING... SOMEONE LIKE THAT WON'T BE LOVED BY ANYONE IN THE WORLD.
BUT-THEY AREN'T WEALTHY IN THE TRUE SENSE. BECAUSE THEY LACK THE MOST IMPORTANT THING.
THE ESSENTIAL SEASONING...!
21
THEY'VE BECOME ECONOMICALLY WEALTHY.
THE JAPANESE HAVE BECOME RICH, THEY HAVE SO MANY THINGS...

NOW, PLEASE, HELP YOURSELF.
IT'S SWEET, PLEASANTLY BITTER, GOES DOWN SMOOTH, AND LEAVES A REFRESHING AFTERTASTE...
MMPH...!
IT'S AS IF A BREEZE FROM A MOUNTAIN STREAM HAS BLOWN RIGHT THROUGH TO MY VERY CORE...
SHOULD I CALL THIS COLOR A GOLDEN HUE TINGED WITH EMERALD...?
WHAT A BEAUTIFUL COLOR...!
22
I SEE! YOU MADE ME WALK THROUGH THAT HEAT SPECIFICALLY SO I COULD SAVOR THIS DELICIOUSNESS...
IF I HADN'T WALKED HERE UNDER THE SCORCHING SUN, I WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO APPRECIATE THIS COLD-BREWED GYOKURO TO THIS EXTENT.
AND BECAUSE I HAD THAT HOT HOJICHA FIRST...

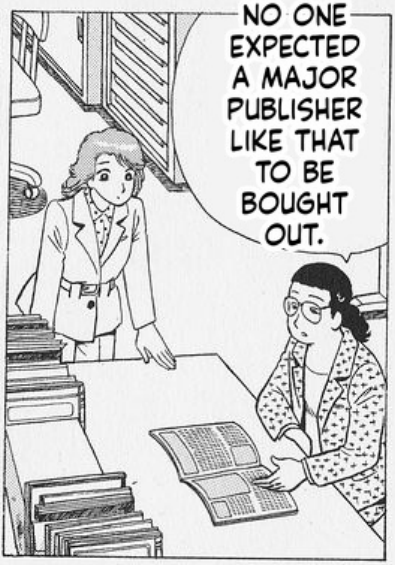
THE TREAT I HAVE FOR YOU TODAY ENDS WITH THIS COLD-BREWED GYOKURO TEA.
OHARA, IF YOU SERVE ANYTHING AFTER THIS, I WILL BE ANGRY.
HOW TRULY LUXURIOUS...
THIS HOUSE... THE SWEET BREEZE BLOWING ACROSS THE RICE FIELDS... THE SOUND OF CICADAS... THE DRAGONFLIES...
WHAT MORE COULD I POSSIBLY ASK FOR...?
THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT WAS MISSING FROM THOSE EXTRAVAGANT MEALS UNTIL YESTERDAY.
I HAVE TASTED THE REAL JAPAN— THE HEART OF JAPAN ITSELF.
AS LONG AS WE DON'T LOSE THIS JAPANESE SPIRIT, JAPAN WILL BE JUST FINE.
23
IAN...


IT'S ALL THANKS TO KURITA-KUN'S ADVICE.
IF I HAD TRIED TO RIVAL PRESIDENT MINEYAMA BY SERVING EXTRAVAGANT FOOD, IAN WOULD HAVE LOST ALL RESPECT FOR ME.
OH, BUT...
BUT THE BASIC IDEA OF SERVING ONLY TEA WAS YOURS...
THIS TIME, THE IDEA WAS ENTIRELY KURITA-SAN'S.
OH, BUT THE COLD-BREW GYOKURO WAS YAMAOKA-SAN'S...
24
WH...
ヒッ ヒッ
IT'S FINE THAT YOU TWO ARE SO CLOSE, BUT DON'T FLAUNT IT IN FRONT OF AN OLD MAN LIKE ME!
BE QUIET, ALREADY.

第7話
「究極」の弱点
〈前編〉


東西新聞社
IT'S BEEN A MONTH SINCE THE PRESIDENT OF DAIKEN PUBLISHING, THE WEEKLY TIME'S PARENT COMPANY, CHANGED.

I HEARD HE TOOK ON MASSIVE DEBT AND HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO SELL THE COMPANY...
THE PREVIOUS PRESIDENT HELD MOST OF THE SHARES PERSONALLY, BUT WITH THE STOCK MARKET CRASH THIS SPRING...


NO ONE EXPECTED A MAJOR PUBLISHER LIKE THAT TO BE BOUGHT OUT.

I HEAR THE NEW PRESIDENT IS INCREDIBLY SKILLED, DESPITE BEING SO YOUNG.

2

BLESS YOU, BLESS YOU...
WHOA, EASY THERE... YOU FILLED IT RIGHT TO THE BRIM, DIDN'T YOU...?

YAMAOKA! YAMAOKA —!
ドタドタドタ

HURRY UP!
KURITA-KUN, BRING THIS MORON TO PRESIDENT OHARA'S OFFICE AT ONCE!

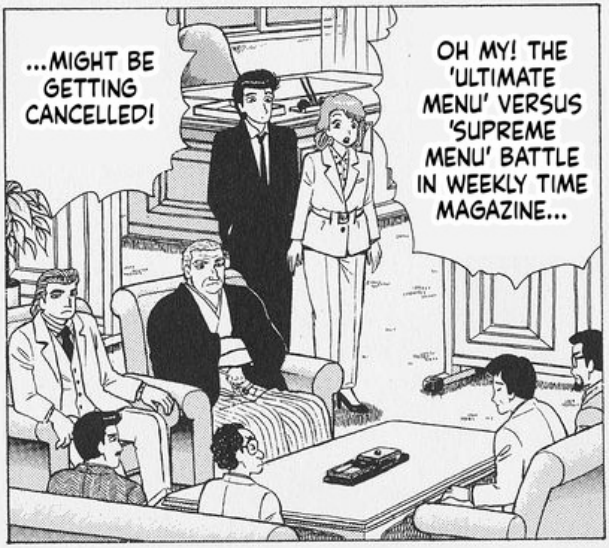
TALKING SUCH IDIOTIC NONSENSE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY!
バキ
Y-Y-Y-Y-YOU-!
OW!!!

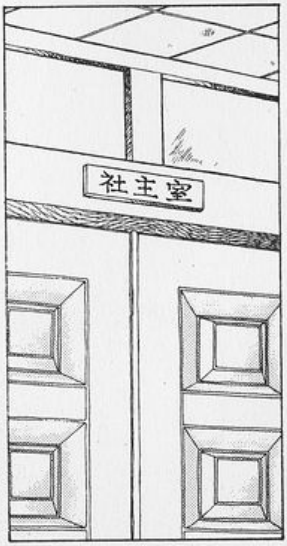
IF YOU WERE GONNA WAKE ME UP, YOU COULD'VE AT LEAST LET ME HAVE ONE SIP FIRST.

Y-YES, SIR.

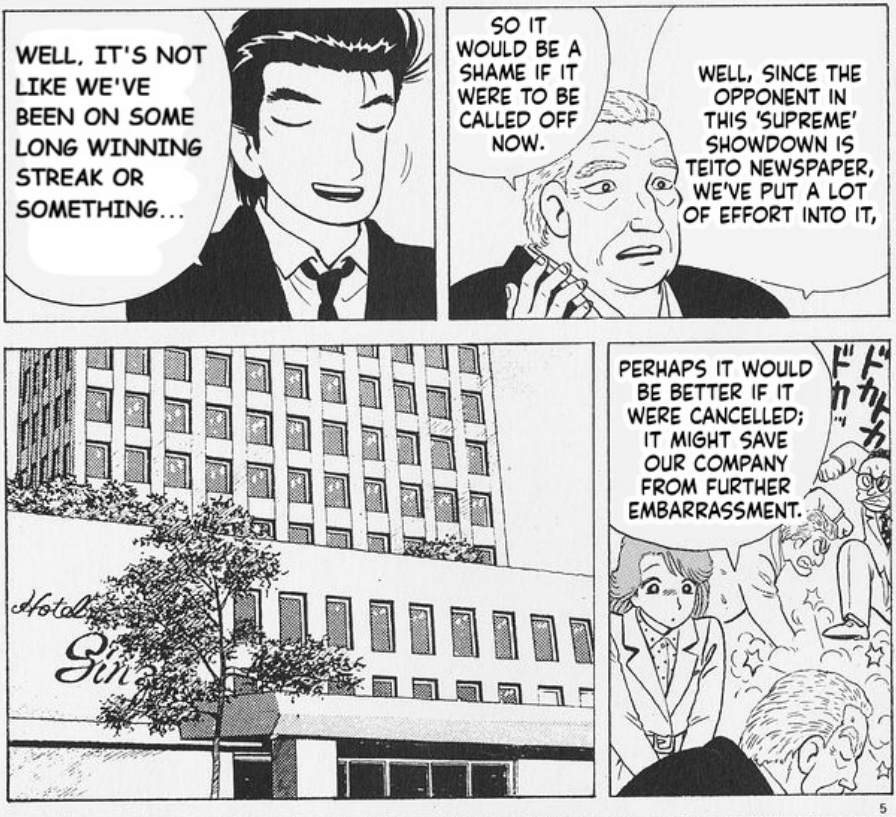
DAMMIT... WAKING ME UP RIGHT WHEN I WAS ABOUT TO DRINK SOME GREAT SAKE.

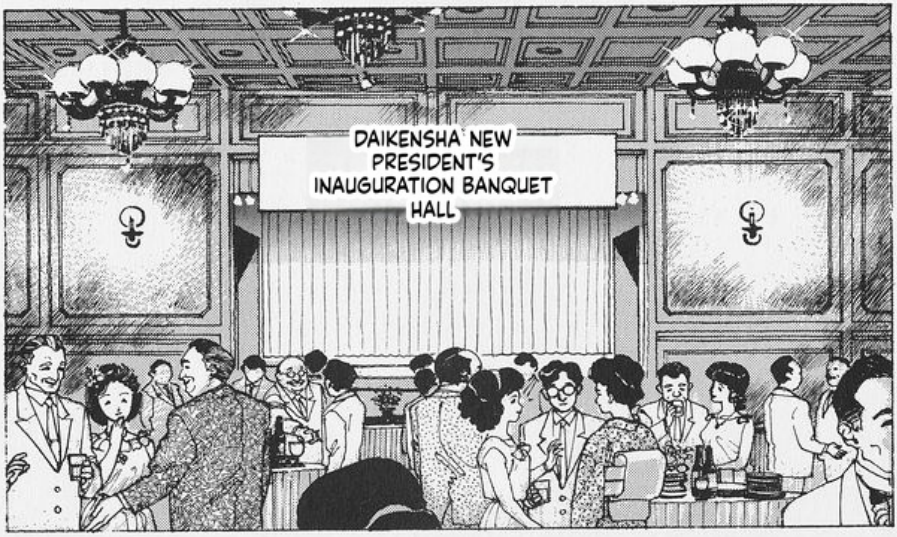
3


...MIGHT BE GETTING CANCELLED!
OH MY! THE 'ULTIMATE MENU' VERSUS 'SUPREME MENU' BATTLE IN WEEKLY TIME MAGAZINE...


社主室

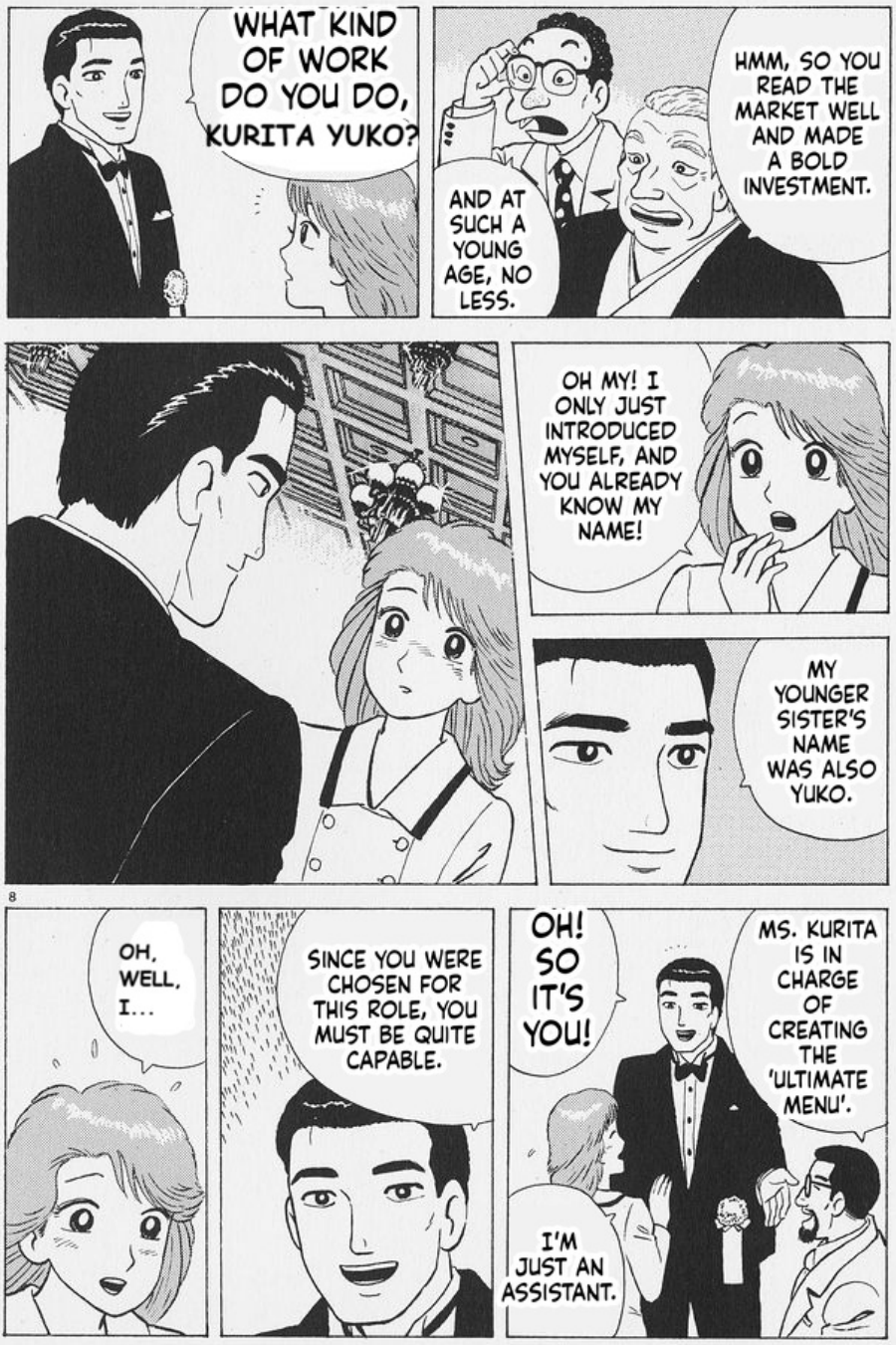
EVEN THE PEOPLE WHO SAID THEY DIDN'T WANT TO STAY AT A COMPANY BOUGHT BY A TOTAL STRANGER ARE NOW COMPLETELY DEVOTED TO THIS NEW PRESIDENT...
HE'S YOUNG, ONLY THIRTY, BUT HE'S AN INCREDIBLE MAN...
THE NEW PRESIDENT'S INTENTION IS TO RADICALLY CHANGE THINGS.
IT HASN'T BEEN OFFICIALLY DECIDED YET, BUT...
WELL, THE NEW PRESIDENT IS...
BUT WHY WOULD HE SAY HE'S CANCELLING IT?
WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO COMPLY...
SINCE IT'S THE PRESIDENT'S WISH...
I'D HEARD HE WAS A HANDFUL FOR SOMEONE SO YOUNG, BUT HE'S EVEN MORE THAN THE RUMORS SUGGESTED.
4
WE CAN'T EXACTLY GO ASKING THE PRESIDENT ABOUT IT AT A VENUE LIKE THAT.
COME TO THINK OF IT, WE WERE INVITED TO THE NEW PRESIDENT'S INAUGURATION PARTY.
THE PROJECT ITSELF SEEMS TO HAVE A GREAT REPUTATION ALL OVER, BUT...

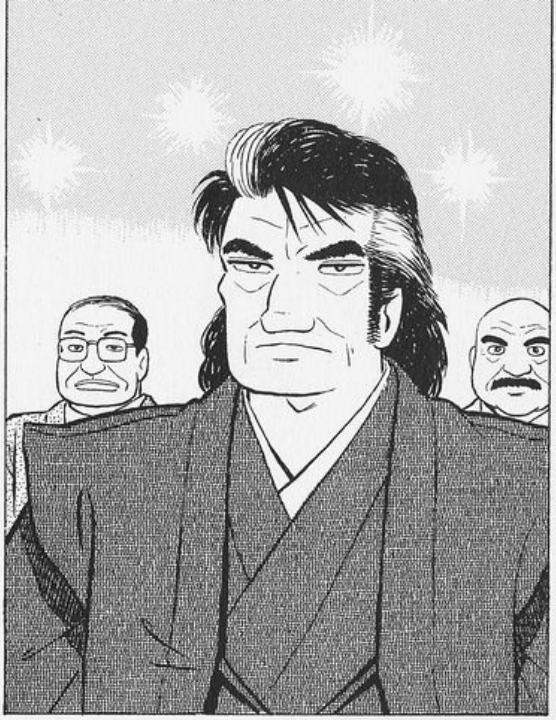

WELL, IT'S NOT LIKE WE'VE BEEN ON SOME LONG WINNING STREAK OR SOMETHING...
SO IT WOULD BE A SHAME IF IT WERE TO BE CALLED OFF NOW.
WELL, SINCE THE OPPONENT IN THIS 'SUPREME' SHOWDOWN IS TEITO NEWSPAPER, WE'VE PUT A LOT OF EFFORT INTO IT,
Hotel Gin
PERHAPS IT WOULD BE BETTER IF IT WERE CANCELLED; IT MIGHT SAVE OUR COMPANY FROM FURTHER EMBARRASSMENT.
ドカッ
ドカ!!
5


DAIKENSHA NEW PRESIDENT'S INAUGURATION BANQUET HALL

THEY'VE ALL FLOCKED HERE TO SEE THE NEW BOSS.
A YOUNG MAN APPEARED OUT OF NOWHERE LIKE A COMET, BOUGHT OUT A MAJOR PUBLISHING HOUSE, AND BECAME ITS PRESIDENT.
WHAT A HUGE CROWD OF PEOPLE.
PRESIDENT, THE PEOPLE FROM TOZAI NEWS ARE...
AS FOR ME, I'M MORE INTERESTED IN THE FOOD THAN THE PRESIDENT'S FACE...
6
I AM DAN. IT IS A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU ALL.

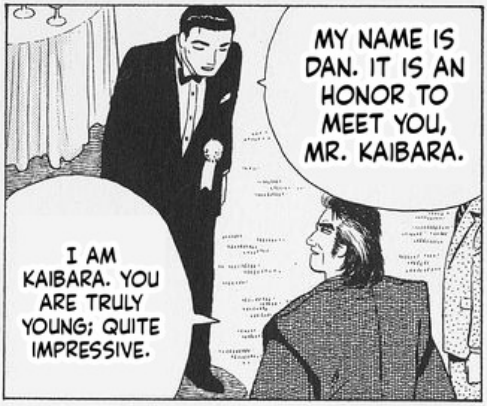
IT'S A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU.
MY NAME IS YUKO KURITA.
I'M KOIZUMI.
AH, I'M OHARA FROM THE TOZAI NEWS.
IT'S A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU.
I'M STILL QUITE YOUNG AND INEXPERIENCED, SO I HOPE TO RECEIVE MUCH GUIDANCE FROM YOU IN THE FUTURE.
TO BE THE PRESIDENT OF A MAJOR PUBLISHING HOUSE AT THIRTY, AND TO HAVE EARNED THAT POSITION THROUGH SHEER MERIT...
IT WASN'T MERIT. I WAS SIMPLY LUCKY.
MY, YOU REALLY ARE YOUNG.
I HEARD YOU STARTED OUT IN COMPUTER-RELATED WORK...
YES, A SOFTWARE PROJECT I STARTED AS A PART-TIME JOB BACK IN UNIVERSITY JUST HAPPENED TO BECOME A FLUKE SUCCESS.
I EXPECT COMPUTER SOFTWARE TO CONTINUE DEVELOPING MORE AND MORE FROM HERE ON.
I BELIEVE THAT BY INCORPORATING THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ACCUMULATED BY PUBLISHERS INTO SOFTWARE, WE CAN EXPECT GREAT RESULTS.
THAT WAS WHEN I RECEIVED AN OFFER TO BUY OUT DAIKENSHA...
NEC PC-9100 YM


WHAT KIND OF WORK DO YOU DO, KURITA YUKO?
AND AT SUCH A YOUNG AGE, NO LESS.
HMM, SO YOU READ THE MARKET WELL AND MADE A BOLD INVESTMENT.
OH MY! I ONLY JUST INTRODUCED MYSELF, AND YOU ALREADY KNOW MY NAME!
MY YOUNGER SISTER'S NAME WAS ALSO YUKO.
8
OH, WELL, I...
SINCE YOU WERE CHOSEN FOR THIS ROLE, YOU MUST BE QUITE CAPABLE.
OH! SO IT'S YOU!
MS. KURITA IS IN CHARGE OF CREATING THE 'ULTIMATE MENU'.
I'M JUST AN ASSISTANT.



PRESIDENT, MR. KAIBARA AND THE PEOPLE FROM TEITO NEWSPAPER HAVE ARRIVED.

PLEASE, I BEG FOR YOUR SUPPORT.
NO, NOT AT ALL, I AM MERELY AN IGNORANT AND POWERLESS YOUTH.


MY NAME IS DAN. IT IS AN HONOR TO MEET YOU, MR. KAIBARA.
I AM KAIBARA. YOU ARE TRULY YOUNG; QUITE IMPRESSIVE.

9

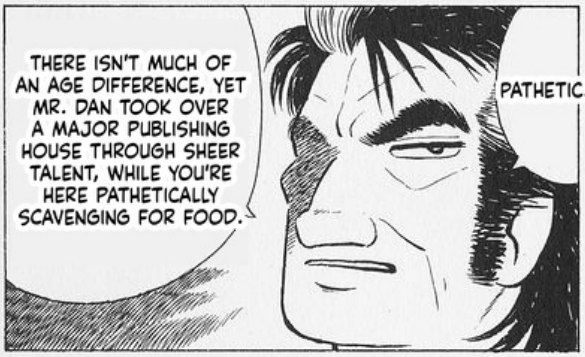
AH! TERRIBLE! MY SHIRT!

AND HE'S NOT THE LEAST BIT OBNOXIOUS ABOUT IT...
HE'S A WONDERFUL PERSON, UNLIKE ANYONE I'VE EVER SEEN...
HIS MANNER IS VERY POLITE AND HUMBLE, YET HE RADIATES CONFIDENCE FROM HIS ENTIRE BEING...

THIS IS WHY I HATE BUFFET PARTIES; IT'S JUST A FRANTIC SCRAMBLE FOR FOOD.

BUT LOOK, THERE'S SO MUCH!

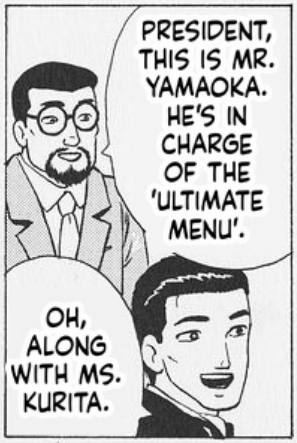
URGH...

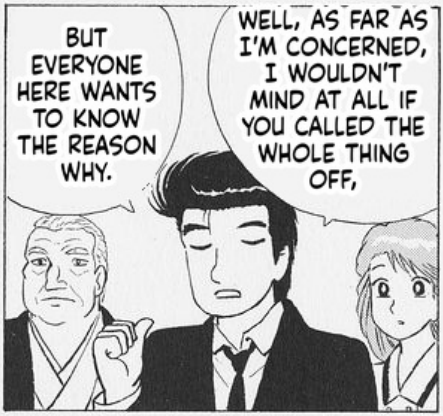

THERE ISN'T MUCH OF AN AGE DIFFERENCE, YET MR. DAN TOOK OVER A MAJOR PUBLISHING HOUSE THROUGH SHEER TALENT, WHILE YOU'RE HERE PATHETICALLY SCAVENGING FOR FOOD.
PATHETIC.

10

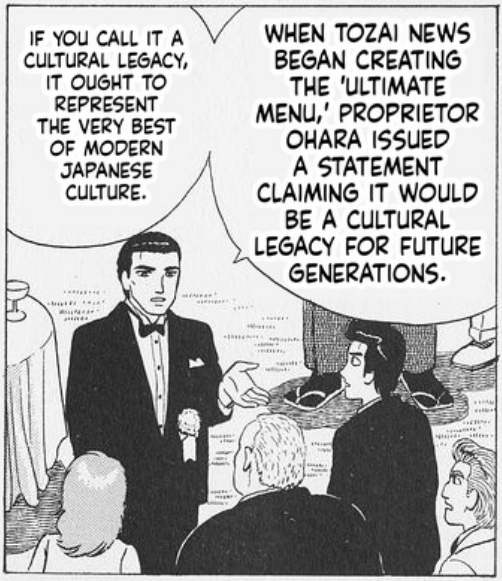
IS IT TRUE YOU'RE CANCELING THE 'ULTIMATE MENU' VERSUS 'SUPREME MENU' PROJECT THAT'S BEEN RUNNING IN YOUR WEEKLY TIME?

HUH... SO YOU'RE THE NEW PRESIDENT...


PRESIDENT, THIS IS MR. YAMAOKA. HE'S IN CHARGE OF THE 'ULTIMATE MENU'.
OH, ALONG WITH MS. KURITA.


BUT EVERYONE HERE WANTS TO KNOW THE REASON WHY.
WELL, AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, I WOULDN'T MIND AT ALL IF YOU CALLED THE WHOLE THING OFF,

IT IS BECAUSE I HAVE GRIEVANCES WITH THE 'ULTIMATE MENU' SIDE.


IF YOU CALL IT A CULTURAL LEGACY, IT OUGHT TO REPRESENT THE VERY BEST OF MODERN JAPANESE CULTURE.
WHEN TOZAI NEWS BEGAN CREATING THE 'ULTIMATE MENU,' PROPRIETOR OHARA ISSUED A STATEMENT CLAIMING IT WOULD BE A CULTURAL LEGACY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

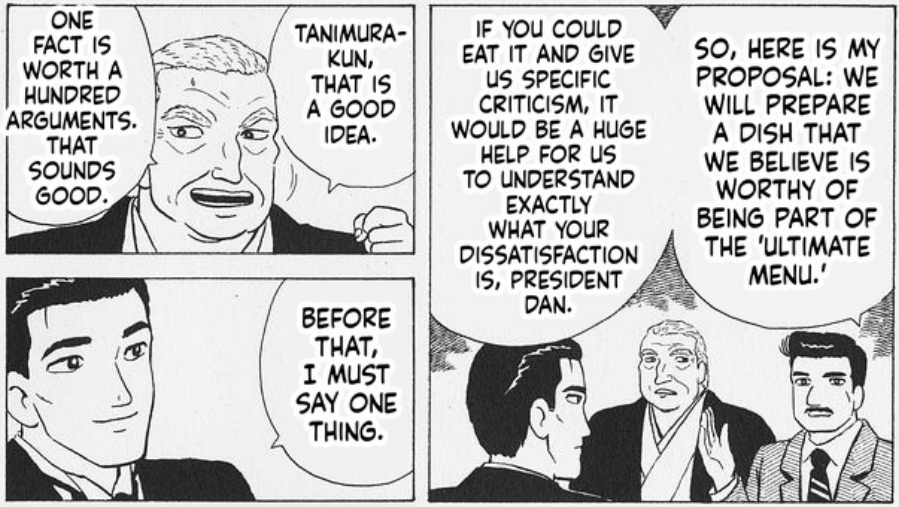
WHAT?!

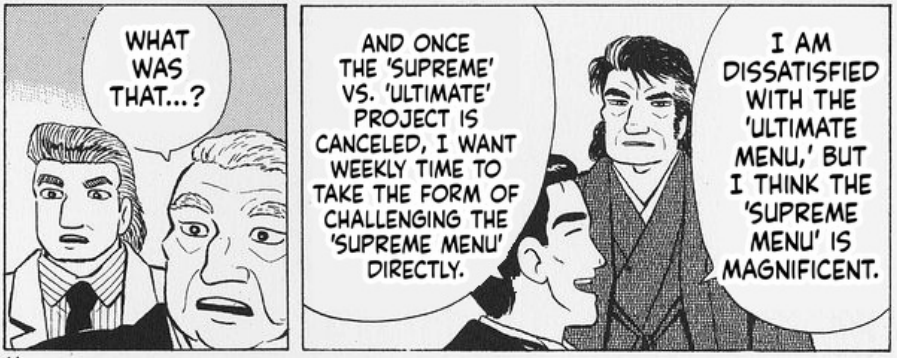
11

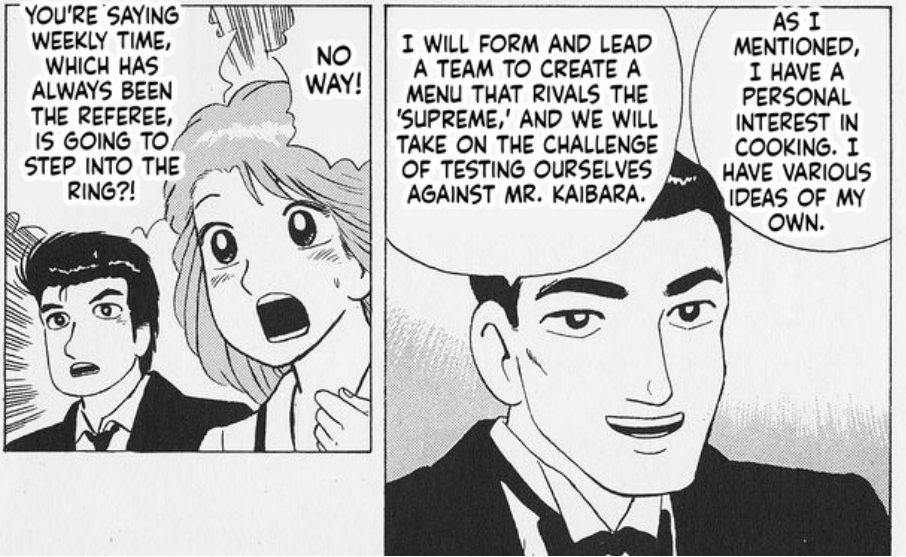
WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?!
ARE YOU DISSATISFIED WITH US?

HOWEVER, IN THE BATTLES AGAINST THE 'SUPREME MENU,' THE JUDGES HAVE RULED IN OUR FAVOR MANY TIMES!
YES, UNFORTUNATELY.
ARE YOU SAYING THE DISHES ON THE 'ULTIMATE MENU' SIDE AREN'T THE BEST?
IS THAT SO...?
THE PURE EXCELLENCE OF THE FOOD INTO ACCOUNT WHEN MAKING THEIR DECISIONS.
READING THE JUDGES' REVIEWS, IT'S OFTEN APPARENT THAT THEY TAKE FACTORS OTHER THAN
にやり
12
I DON'T THINK YOU CAN MAKE A CALL LIKE THAT!
BUT HOW CAN YOU MAKE SUCH A JUDGMENT WHEN YOU HAVEN'T ACTUALLY TASTED EITHER THE 'ULTIMATE' OR THE 'SUPREME' DISHES?!
THEY STAND UPON THE BROAD FOUNDATION OF JAPANESE CULTURAL TRADITION, WITH A PEAK THAT REACHES A DISTANT HEIGHT.
IN CONTRAST, I BELIEVE THE DISHES OF THE 'SUPREME MENU' LED BY KAIBARA-SENSEI ARE MAGNIFICENT.
KAIBARA-SENSEI'S COOKING IS THE PINNACLE OF MODERN JAPANESE CULTURE.

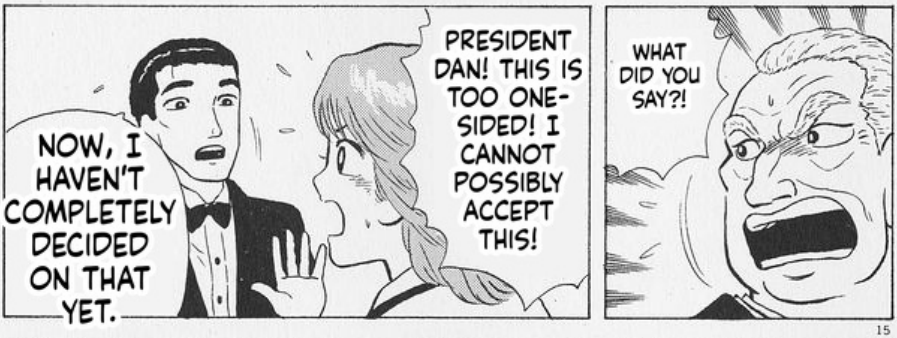
!
!
THEREFORE, I HAVE TASTED BOTH DISHES, ALBEIT INDIRECTLY.
I LOOKED AT THE MENUS PUBLISHED IN WEEKLY TIME, COOKED THEM MYSELF, AND ATE THEM.
I SEE, SO THAT'S WHY YOU WERE ABLE TO FORM SUCH PRECISE OPINIONS ON BOTH CUISINES.
BUT THAT'S LIKE CRITIQUING AN ORIGINAL PAINTING WHILE LOOKING AT A COPY SOMEONE ELSE DREW!
PRESIDENT DAN, DO YOU COOK FOR YOURSELF?!
THIS IS A SHOCK!
YOU'D HAVE TO BE INCREDIBLY SKILLED TO DO THAT!
TO THINK YOU COULD RECREATE BOTH DISHES JUST FROM THE ARTICLES IN WEEKLY TIME...
13
ON THE OTHER HAND, WE HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THE SOURCE OF PRESIDENT DAN'S DISSATISFACTION IS...
IT SEEMS TO BE AN UNDENIABLE FACT THAT PRESIDENT DAN IS DISSATISFIED WITH THE 'ULTIMATE' SIDE.
PLEASE, WAIT.


ONE FACT IS WORTH A HUNDRED ARGUMENTS. THAT SOUNDS GOOD.
TANIMURA-KUN, THAT IS A GOOD IDEA.
BEFORE THAT, I MUST SAY ONE THING.
IF YOU COULD EAT IT AND GIVE US SPECIFIC CRITICISM, IT WOULD BE A HUGE HELP FOR US TO UNDERSTAND EXACTLY WHAT YOUR DISSATISFACTION IS, PRESIDENT DAN.
SO, HERE IS MY PROPOSAL: WE WILL PREPARE A DISH THAT WE BELIEVE IS WORTHY OF BEING PART OF THE 'ULTIMATE MENU.'

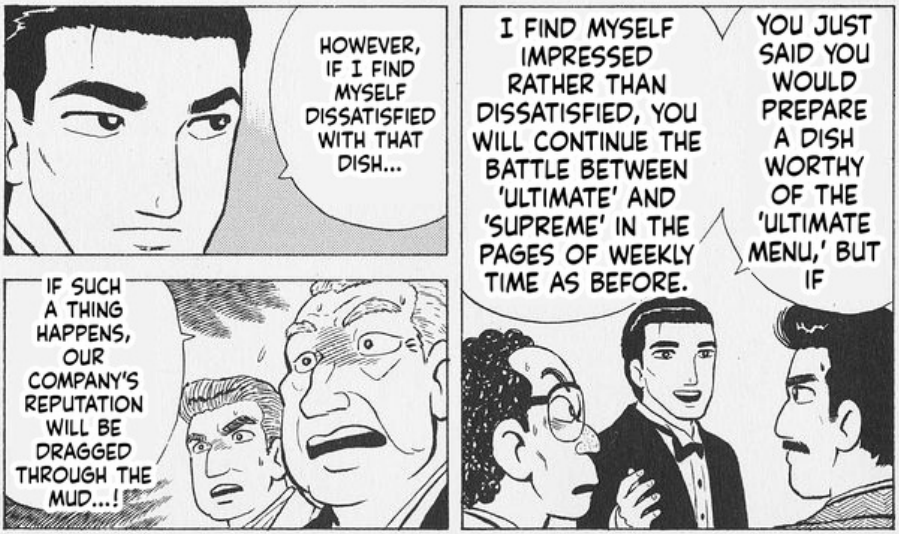

WHAT WAS THAT...?
AND ONCE THE 'SUPREME' VS. 'ULTIMATE' PROJECT IS CANCELED, I WANT WEEKLY TIME TO TAKE THE FORM OF CHALLENGING THE 'SUPREME MENU' DIRECTLY.
I AM DISSATISFIED WITH THE 'ULTIMATE MENU,' BUT I THINK THE 'SUPREME MENU' IS MAGNIFICENT.


YOU'RE SAYING WEEKLY TIME, WHICH HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE REFEREE, IS GOING TO STEP INTO THE RING?!
NO WAY!
I WILL FORM AND LEAD A TEAM TO CREATE A MENU THAT RIVALS THE 'SUPREME,' AND WE WILL TAKE ON THE CHALLENGE OF TESTING OURSELVES AGAINST MR. KAIBARA.
AS I MENTIONED, I HAVE A PERSONAL INTEREST IN COOKING. I HAVE VARIOUS IDEAS OF MY OWN.

THEN THE WEEKLY TIME ITSELF WILL TAKE UP THE CHALLENGE AGAINST THE 'SUPREME MENU' INSTEAD.
THIS MAKES YOUR DEFEAT CRYSTAL CLEAR.
THE 'ULTIMATE MENU' CAN'T STAND UP TO THE 'SUPREME MENU,' SO YOU'RE STEPPING OUT OF THE RING.
WAH-HAH-HAH-HAH! THIS IS HILARIOUS!


NOW, I HAVEN'T COMPLETELY DECIDED ON THAT YET.
PRESIDENT DAN! THIS IS TOO ONE-SIDED! I CANNOT POSSIBLY ACCEPT THIS!
WHAT DID YOU SAY?!

15


HOWEVER, IF I FIND MYSELF DISSATISFIED WITH THAT DISH...
IF SUCH A THING HAPPENS, OUR COMPANY'S REPUTATION WILL BE DRAGGED THROUGH THE MUD...!
I FIND MYSELF IMPRESSED RATHER THAN DISSATISFIED, YOU WILL CONTINUE THE BATTLE BETWEEN 'ULTIMATE' AND 'SUPREME' IN THE PAGES OF WEEKLY TIME AS BEFORE.
YOU JUST SAID YOU WOULD PREPARE A DISH WORTHY OF THE 'ULTIMATE MENU,' BUT IF

HEH HEH HEH... PRESIDENT DAN HAS SEEN THROUGH THE WEAKNESS OF THE 'ULTIMATE MENU' AND IS DISSATISFIED WITH IT.
HOWEVER, SINCE YOU HAVEN'T REALIZED YOUR OWN WEAKNESS, YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHERE HIS DISSATISFACTION LIES.

NO MATTER WHAT YOU TRY TO MAKE NOW, YOU'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO SATISFY PRESIDENT DAN.
THIS IS THE END FOR THE 'ULTIMATE MENU'.
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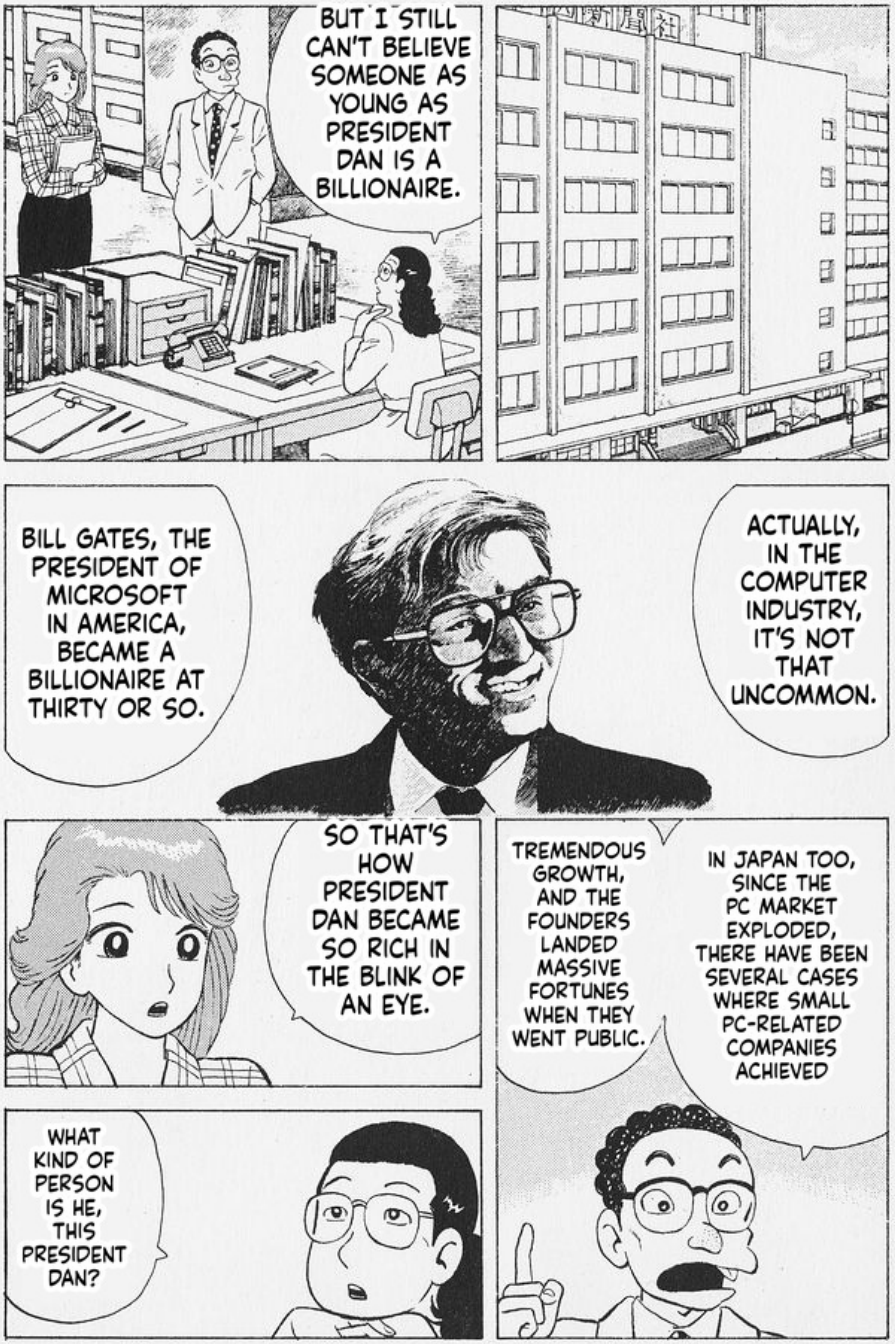

BUT I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE SOMEONE AS YOUNG AS PRESIDENT DAN IS A BILLIONAIRE.
BILL GATES, THE PRESIDENT OF MICROSOFT IN AMERICA, BECAME A BILLIONAIRE AT THIRTY OR SO.
ACTUALLY, IN THE COMPUTER INDUSTRY, IT'S NOT THAT UNCOMMON.
SO THAT'S HOW PRESIDENT DAN BECAME SO RICH IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE.
TREMENDOUS GROWTH, AND THE FOUNDERS LANDED MASSIVE FORTUNES WHEN THEY WENT PUBLIC.
IN JAPAN TOO, SINCE THE PC MARKET EXPLODED, THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL CASES WHERE SMALL PC-RELATED COMPANIES ACHIEVED
WHAT KIND OF PERSON IS HE, THIS PRESIDENT DAN?

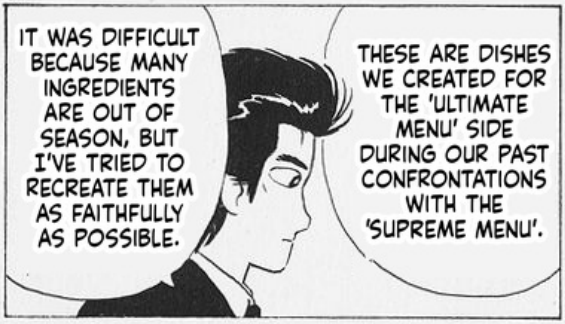
17

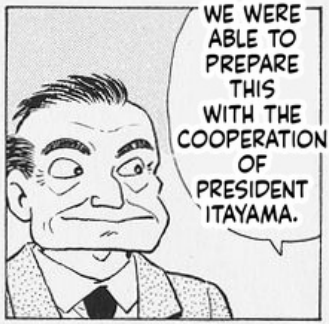
I BET YOUR HEART IS SWAYING...
WOW! THAT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER HEARD KURITA-SAN TALK ABOUT A MAN LIKE THAT!
OH, PLEASE DON'T SAY SUCH STRANGE THINGS.
I'VE NEVER SEEN SUCH A CHARMING MAN.
IT'S ANNOYING THAT HE INSULTED THE "ULTIMATE MENU," BUT HE'S A WONDERFUL MAN.
THAT MAN HAS A WAY OF DRAWING PEOPLE IN.
IT'S NOT JUST THAT HE'S RICH AND HANDSOME.
INDEED, EVEN IF IT WEREN'T KURITA-KUN, ONE'S HEART WOULD BE MOVED.
ボォ
18
GOOD GRIEF... COMPARED TO PRESIDENT DAN, THIS GUY IS LIKE A PATHETIC STRAY DOG.

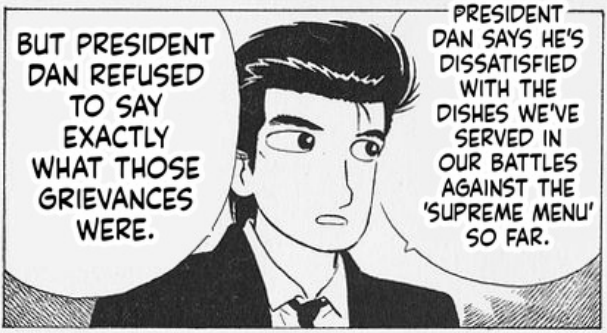
I STAYED UP ALL NIGHT RESEARCHING DISHES FOR PRESIDENT DAN TO TRY.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW HARD I'VE BEEN WORKING!
YAMAOKA! YOU WERE OUT DRINKING UNTIL LATE AGAIN LAST NIGHT AND HAVE A HANGOVER, DON'T YOU!
I'M MAKING A SPECIAL EXCEPTION, SO GO SLEEP IN THE NAP ROOM!
HEY! DON'T SLEEP IN A PLACE LIKE THIS!
NO, THIS SPOT I'M USED TO IS DEFINITELY THE BEST...
OH, REALLY?
WELL THEN, GOOD NIGHT.
I'LL SHOW YOU THE RESULTS DURING THE LUNCH BREAK.
19
NEW GINZA
NEW GINZA
TO HIM, THIS SACRED WORKPLACE IS JUST HIS FAVORITE BEDROOM!
UGH, GRRR...! WHAT A PIECE OF WORK!

INCREDIBLE! IT'S LIKE A FLORAL GARDEN OF GOURMET FOOD!

20

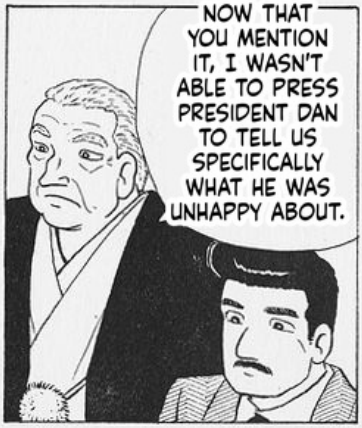

IT WAS DIFFICULT BECAUSE MANY INGREDIENTS ARE OUT OF SEASON, BUT I'VE TRIED TO RECREATE THEM AS FAITHFULLY AS POSSIBLE.
THESE ARE DISHES WE CREATED FOR THE 'ULTIMATE MENU' SIDE DURING OUR PAST CONFRONTATIONS WITH THE 'SUPREME MENU'.

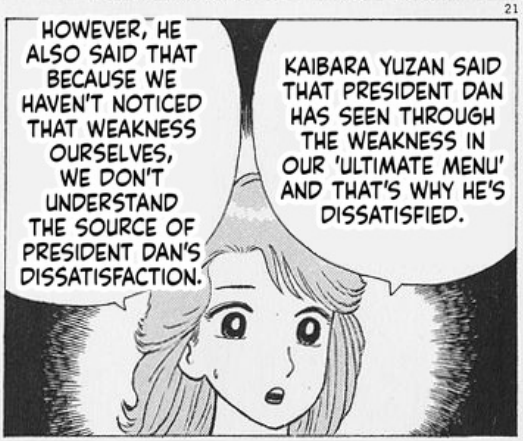

WE WERE ABLE TO PREPARE THIS WITH THE COOPERATION OF PRESIDENT ITAYAMA.


BUT PRESIDENT DAN REFUSED TO SAY EXACTLY WHAT THOSE GRIEVANCES WERE.
PRESIDENT DAN SAYS HE'S DISSATISFIED WITH THE DISHES WE'VE SERVED IN OUR BATTLES AGAINST THE 'SUPREME MENU' SO FAR.

BUT WHY DID YOU STAY UP ALL NIGHT PREPARING ALL OF THIS?

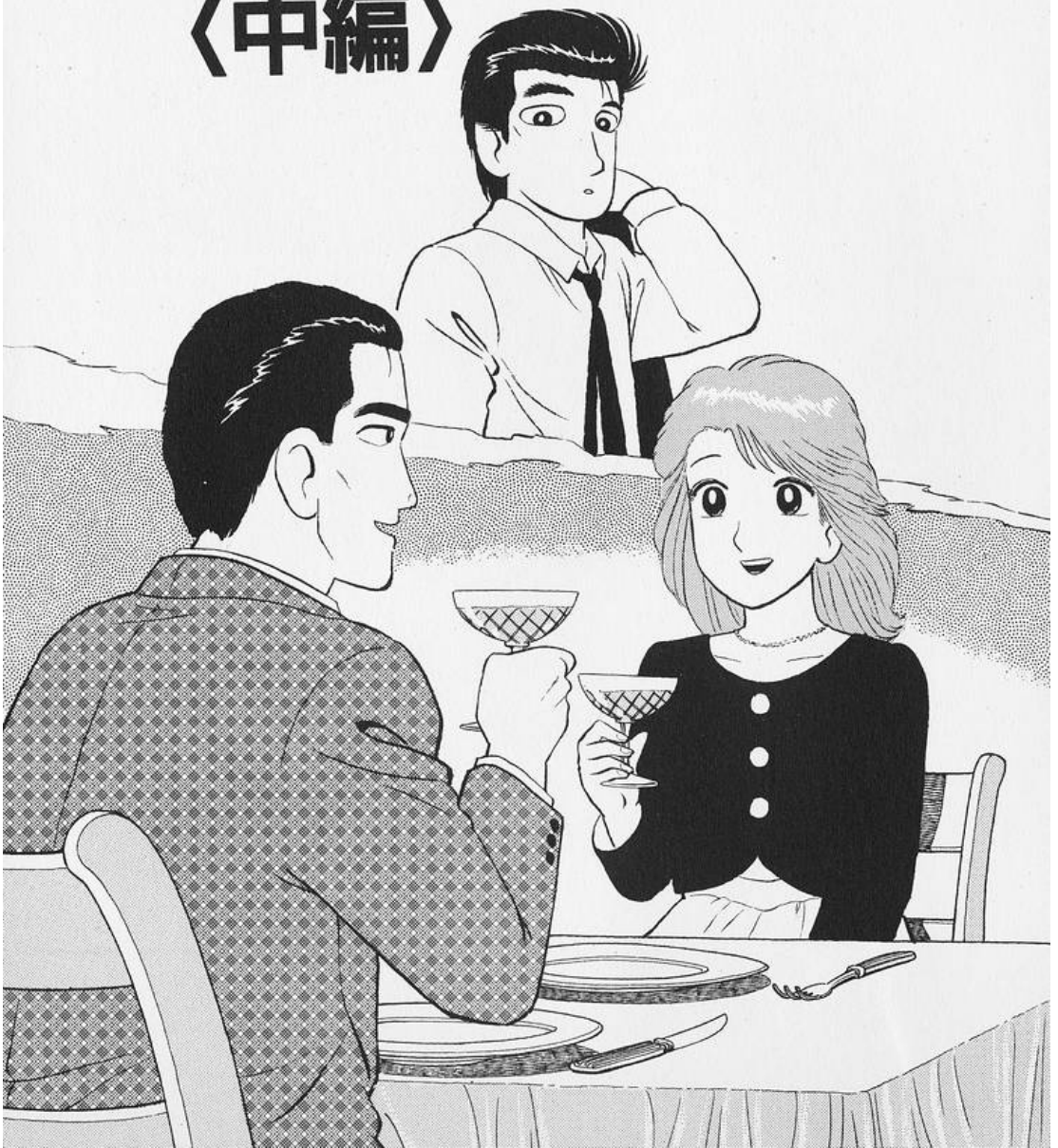
21


NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, I WASN'T ABLE TO PRESS PRESIDENT DAN TO TELL US SPECIFICALLY WHAT HE WAS UNHAPPY ABOUT.

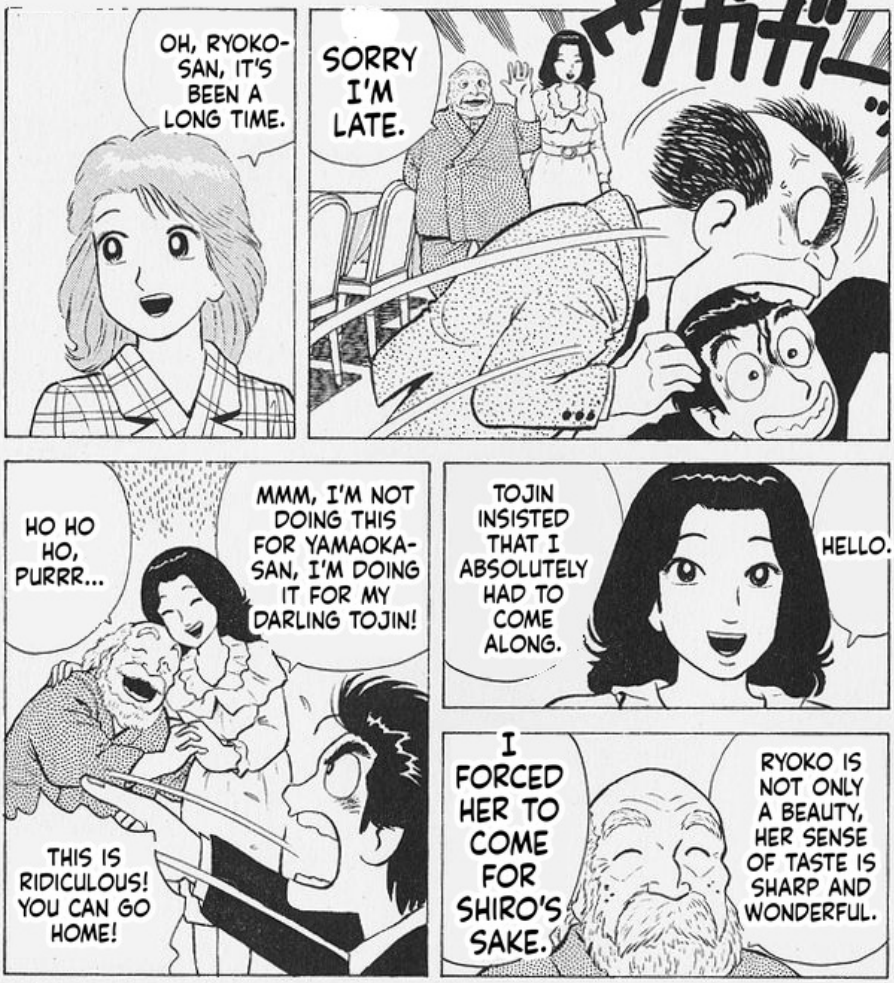

HOWEVER, HE ALSO SAID THAT BECAUSE WE HAVEN'T NOTICED THAT WEAKNESS OURSELVES, WE DON'T UNDERSTAND THE SOURCE OF PRESIDENT DAN'S DISSATISFACTION.
KAIBARA YUZAN SAID THAT PRESIDENT DAN HAS SEEN THROUGH THE WEAKNESS IN OUR 'ULTIMATE MENU' AND THAT'S WHY HE'S DISSATISFIED.

YES.
SO YOU'VE RECREATED ALL THE DISHES WE'VE SERVED SO FAR TO FIND OUT WHERE THE WEAKNESS LIES.
BUT UNLESS WE KNOW WHAT PRESIDENT DAN IS DISSATISFIED WITH AND WHAT THE 'ULTIMATE' SIDE'S WEAKNESS HAS BEEN, WE CAN'T MAKE OUR NEXT MOVE.
AND I ALSO WANT YOU TO TELL ME WHERE THE WEAKNESS IS.
I WANT EVERYONE TO EXAMINE THE DISHES I'VE PREPARED HERE ONCE MORE.
22

第7話
「究極」の弱点
〈中編〉



SO ALL OF THESE DISHES ARE THE 'ULTIMATE MENU' CREATED TO RIVAL THE 'SUPREME MENU'...
FINDING A FLAW IN THEM IS GOING TO BE A REAL CHALLENGE.
I MEAN, WHERE COULD THERE POSSIBLY BE A WEAKNESS IN THIS FOOD?
2
JUST LETTING US USE THIS SPACE IS MORE THAN ENOUGH.
I'M NOT EXPECTING ANYTHING FROM YOU, PRESIDENT ITAYAMA.
DON'T YOU WORRY.
IT'S FAR BEYOND MY CAPABILITIES...


OH, RYOKO-SAN, IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME.
SORRY I'M LATE.
ガガガ…
HO HO HO, PURRR...
MMM, I'M NOT DOING THIS FOR YAMAOKA-SAN, I'M DOING IT FOR MY DARLING TOJIN!
THIS IS RIDICULOUS! YOU CAN GO HOME!
TOJIN INSISTED THAT I ABSOLUTELY HAD TO COME ALONG.
HELLO.
I FORCED HER TO COME FOR SHIRO'S SAKE.
RYOKO IS NOT ONLY A BEAUTY, HER SENSE OF TASTE IS SHARP AND WONDERFUL.
3
THEY CAME ALL THIS WAY TO HELP US!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

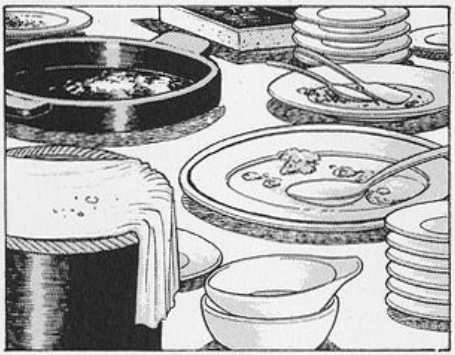
EVERYTHING IS DELICIOUS, THOUGH...
I WONDER WHAT HE MEANT BY A WEAKNESS?
BUT I DON'T THINK PRESIDENT DAN IS THE TYPE OF PERSON TO TALK NONSENSE.
I CAN'T SEEM TO FIND ANY SORT OF WEAKNESS, THOUGH...
4
NO, IT'S NOT SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
WHAT IS IT? THE SEASONING? THE USE OF SPICES? THE HEAT CONTROL?
IT'S SOMETHING MORE FUNDAMENTAL.
YES, OF COURSE.
WELL, RYOKO, DO YOU FIND ANYTHING UNSATISFYING?
WAIT, YOU'RE DISSATISFIED?!

I'M HUNGRY, SO GIVE ME A LOT MORE!
THE PORTIONS ARE TOO SMALL!

FUNDAMENTAL!

MEANING...?

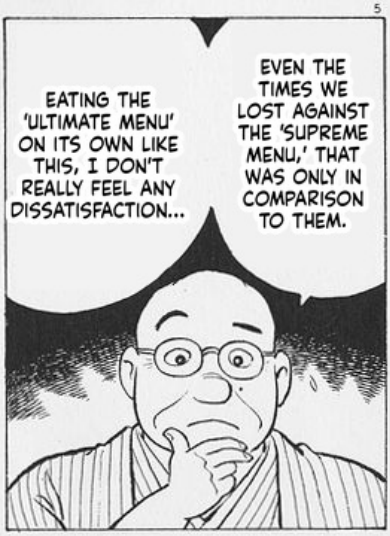
I'VE TRIED ALL THE DISHES, AND TO ME, EVERY SINGLE ONE IS AS GOOD AS IT GETS...
GOOD GRIEF...!

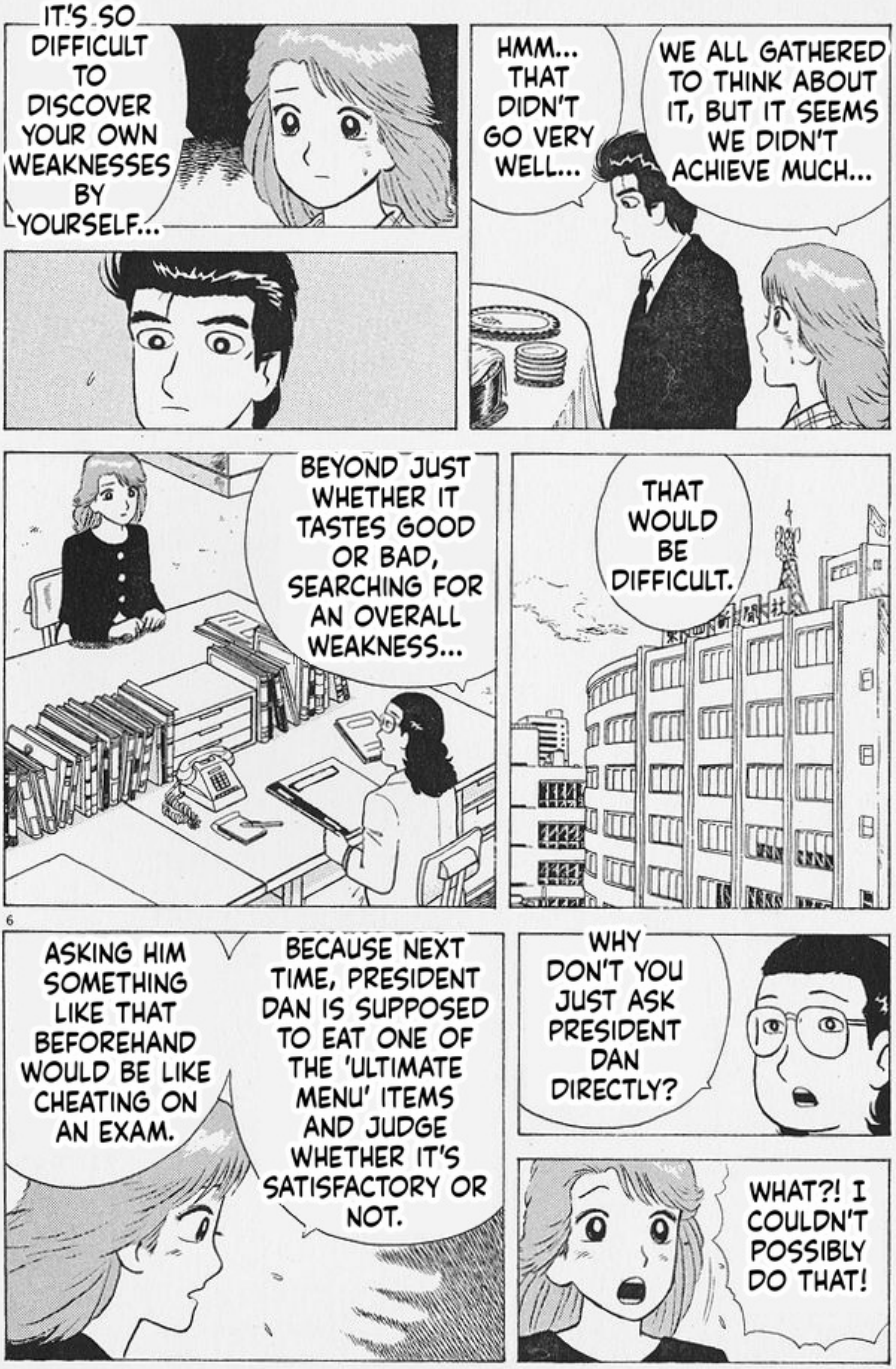


5

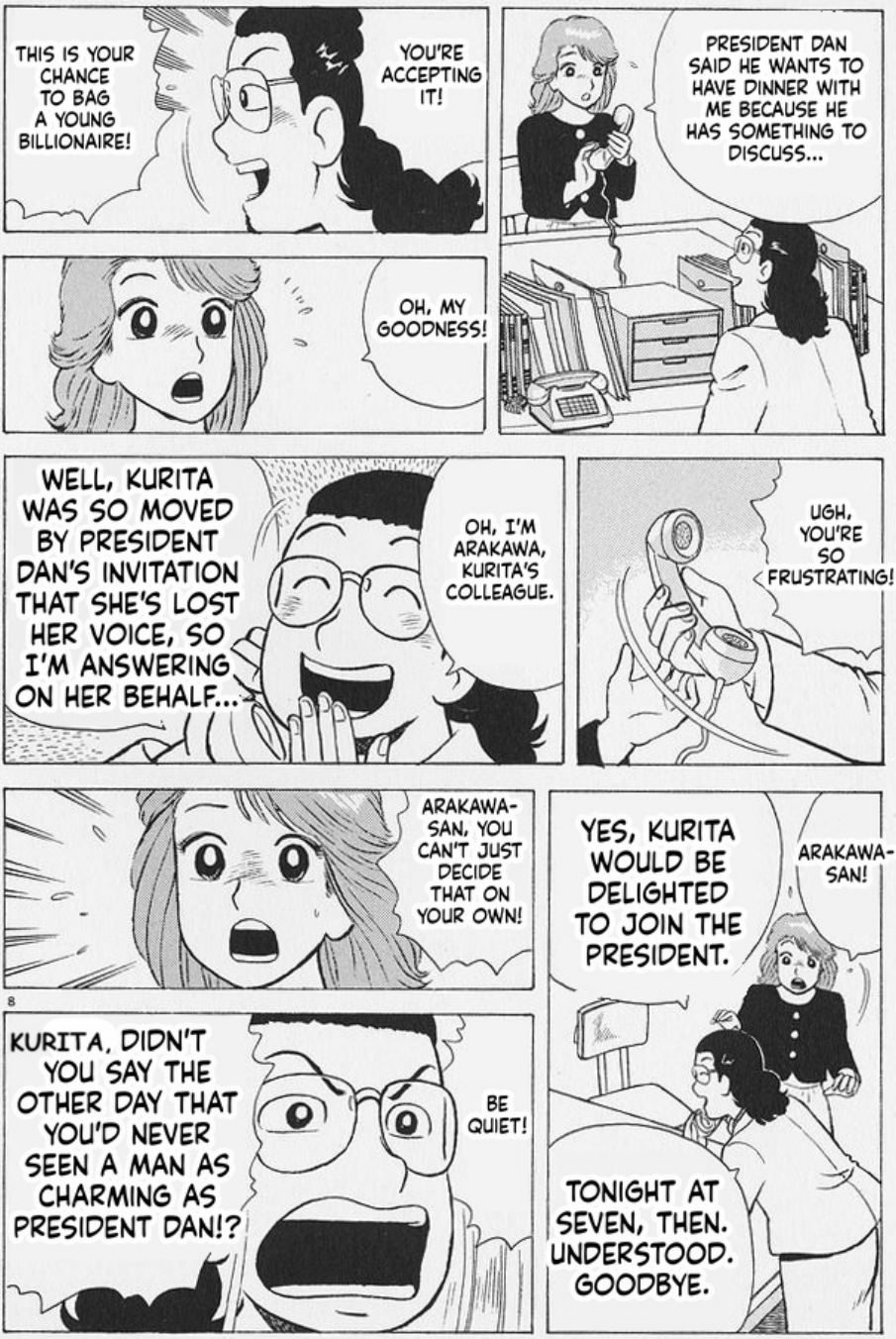
I SUPPOSE PRESIDENT DAN WOULD SAY THE WEAKNESS LIES IN THE FUNDAMENTAL PARTS?
EVEN WITH THE DISHES THAT WON AGAINST THE 'SUPREME' SIDE,

BASED ON PRESIDENT DAN'S PHRASING, I SUPPOSE THAT'S HOW IT WOULD BE.


EATING THE 'ULTIMATE MENU' ON ITS OWN LIKE THIS, I DON'T REALLY FEEL ANY DISSATISFACTION...
EVEN THE TIMES WE LOST AGAINST THE 'SUPREME MENU,' THAT WAS ONLY IN COMPARISON TO THEM.


IT'S SO DIFFICULT TO DISCOVER YOUR OWN WEAKNESSES BY YOURSELF...
HMM... THAT DIDN'T GO VERY WELL...
WE ALL GATHERED TO THINK ABOUT IT, BUT IT SEEMS WE DIDN'T ACHIEVE MUCH...
BEYOND JUST WHETHER IT TASTES GOOD OR BAD, SEARCHING FOR AN OVERALL WEAKNESS...
THAT WOULD BE DIFFICULT.
6
ASKING HIM SOMETHING LIKE THAT BEFOREHAND WOULD BE LIKE CHEATING ON AN EXAM.
BECAUSE NEXT TIME, PRESIDENT DAN IS SUPPOSED TO EAT ONE OF THE 'ULTIMATE MENU' ITEMS AND JUDGE WHETHER IT'S SATISFACTORY OR NOT.
WHY DON'T YOU JUST ASK PRESIDENT DAN DIRECTLY?
WHAT?! I COULDN'T POSSIBLY DO THAT!

WHAT! PRESIDENT DAN OF DAIKEN PUBLISHING!
YES, THIS IS KURITA SPEAKING...
YES, THIS IS THE CULTURE DEPARTMENT.
I AM TRULY SORRY FOR SAYING SUCH SELFISH THINGS THE OTHER DAY.
...ME, HAVING DINNER WITH PRESIDENT DAN?!
OH MY, WHAT A MESS!
7
FURTHERMORE, THINGS HAVE DEVELOPED INTO A SITUATION WHERE WE'LL BE TESTING THE 'ULTIMATE MENU,' AND I HAVE SOMETHING I'D LIKE TO DISCUSS REGARDING THAT.
AND SO, I WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE TO APOLOGIZE TO YOU, KURITA.


THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO BAG A YOUNG BILLIONAIRE!
YOU'RE ACCEPTING IT!
PRESIDENT DAN SAID HE WANTS TO HAVE DINNER WITH ME BECAUSE HE HAS SOMETHING TO DISCUSS...
OH, MY GOODNESS!
WELL, KURITA WAS SO MOVED BY PRESIDENT DAN'S INVITATION THAT SHE'S LOST HER VOICE, SO I'M ANSWERING ON HER BEHALF...
OH, I'M ARAKAWA, KURITA'S COLLEAGUE.
UGH, YOU'RE SO FRUSTRATING!
ARAKAWA-SAN, YOU CAN'T JUST DECIDE THAT ON YOUR OWN!
YES, KURITA WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO JOIN THE PRESIDENT.
ARAKAWA-SAN!
KURITA, DIDN'T YOU SAY THE OTHER DAY THAT YOU'D NEVER SEEN A MAN AS CHARMING AS PRESIDENT DAN!?
BE QUIET!
TONIGHT AT SEVEN, THEN. UNDERSTOOD. GOODBYE.

8

EVEN IF YOU SAY THAT...
NO 'BUTS'! IF YOU DON'T GIVE IT YOUR ALL NOW, WHEN WILL YOU?!
YES, BUT...
I'M PENNILESS AND CAN'T EVEN AFFORD LUNCH...
SIGH... SOMEONE LEND ME SOME MONEY~~
ヨタ ヨタ...
I'VE DONE A THOROUGH BACKGROUND CHECK ON PRESIDENT DAN OF DAIKENSHA.
YAMAOKA-KUN, KURITA-KUN.
9
YES, TRULY...
THERE'S JUST NO COMPARING HIM TO A MAN LIKE THIS!
SEE?

NO, HOHOHO... IT'S NOTHING.

ALRIGHT, I'VE GOT IT!

IS SOMETHING THE MATTER?

YEAH, HE'S SINGLE.

HE'S SINGLE, ISN'T HE?

THAT'S INCREDIBLE.

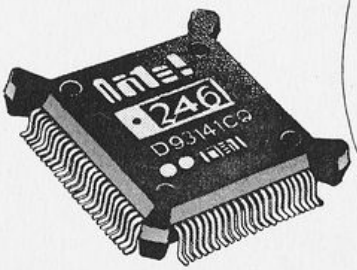
FOLLOWING THAT, HE CREATED A VIDEO GAME THAT BECAME A MASSIVE HIT IN BOTH JAPAN AND AMERICA.

WHEN PRESIDENT DAN WAS A FRESHMAN IN COLLEGE, HE CREATED JAPANESE WORD-PROCESSING SOFTWARE WITH FEATURES THAT WERE REVOLUTIONARY FOR THE TIME,

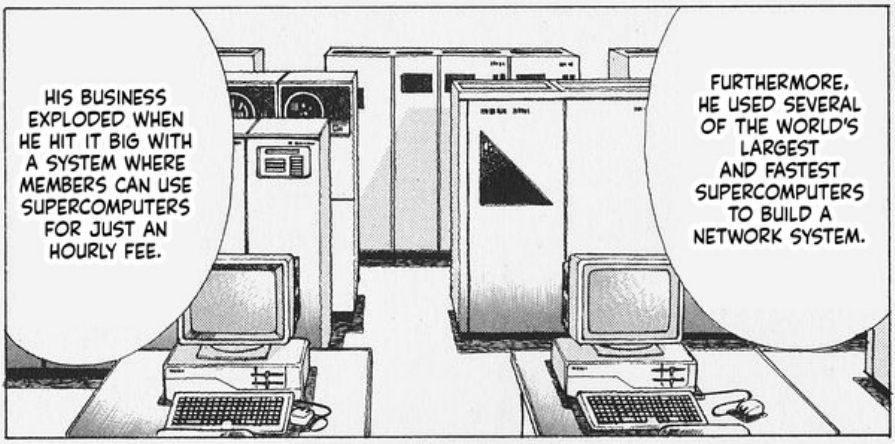
HE ALREADY BECAME A BILLIONAIRE FROM THOSE TWO SUCCESSES.

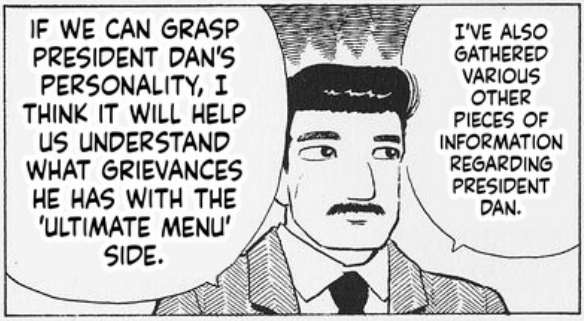
WHAT'S AMAZING ABOUT PRESIDENT DAN IS WHAT HAPPENED NEXT.

TODAY, WHEN IT COMES TO THE LATEST 32-BIT MICROPROCESSORS, MORE THAN A THIRD OF THE WORLD'S SUPPLY USES PRESIDENT DAN'S PATENTS.



USING THAT MONEY AS CAPITAL, PRESIDENT DAN STARTED A COMPANY AND SET TO WORK DEVELOPING MICROPROCESSORS —THE HEART OF THE COMPUTER.


HIS BUSINESS EXPLODED WHEN HE HIT IT BIG WITH A SYSTEM WHERE MEMBERS CAN USE SUPERCOMPUTERS FOR JUST AN HOURLY FEE.
FURTHERMORE, HE USED SEVERAL OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST AND FASTEST SUPERCOMPUTERS TO BUILD A NETWORK SYSTEM.


IF WE CAN GRASP PRESIDENT DAN'S PERSONALITY, I THINK IT WILL HELP US UNDERSTAND WHAT GRIEVANCES HE HAS WITH THE 'ULTIMATE MENU' SIDE.
I'VE ALSO GATHERED VARIOUS OTHER PIECES OF INFORMATION REGARDING PRESIDENT DAN.

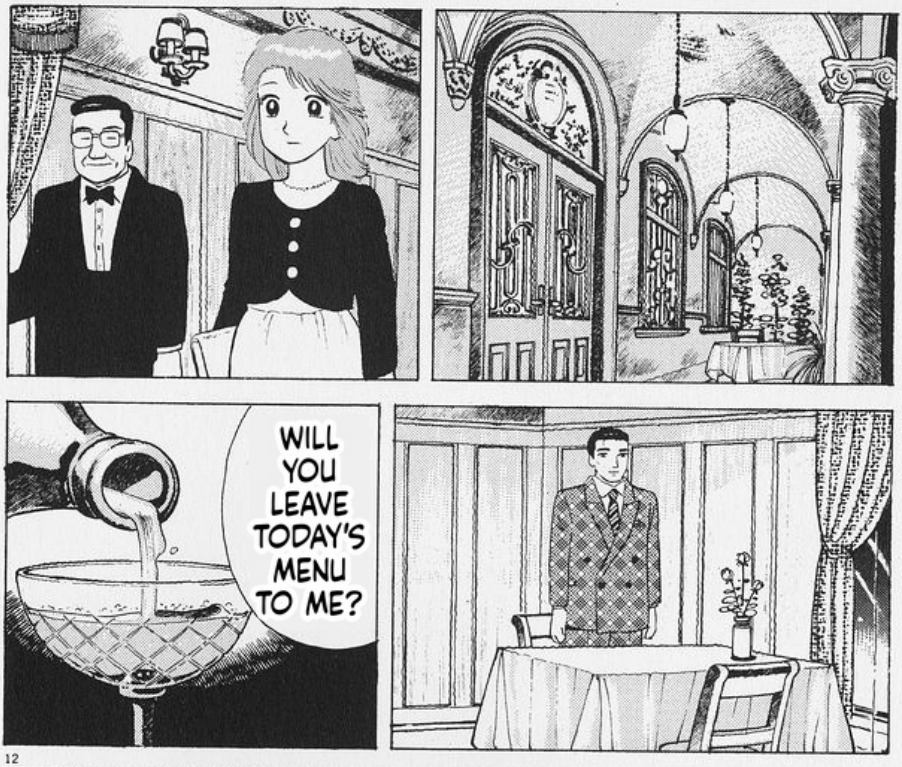
AND HE DID ALL THAT AT ONLY 30 YEARS OLD!

11

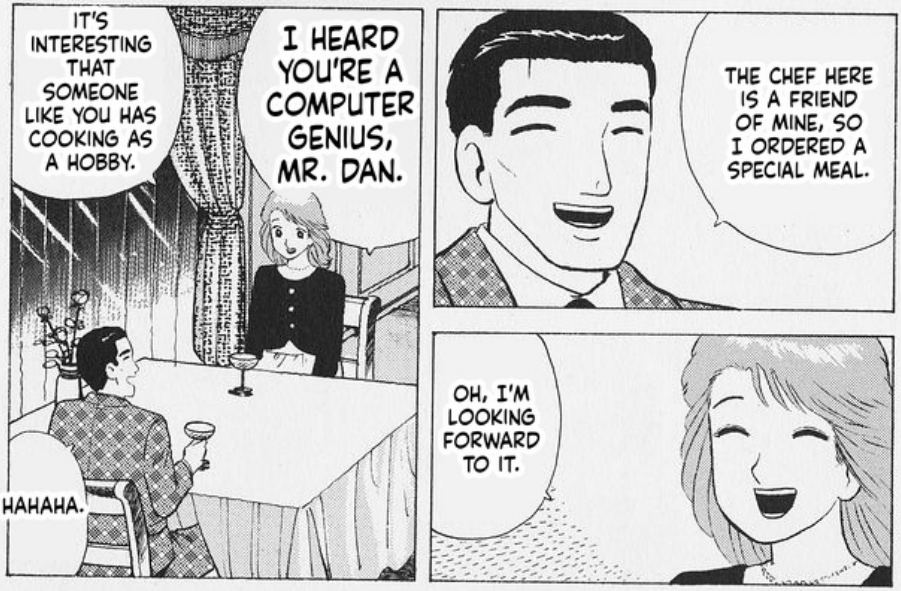
WHAT A PATHETIC VOICE YOU'RE MAKING!

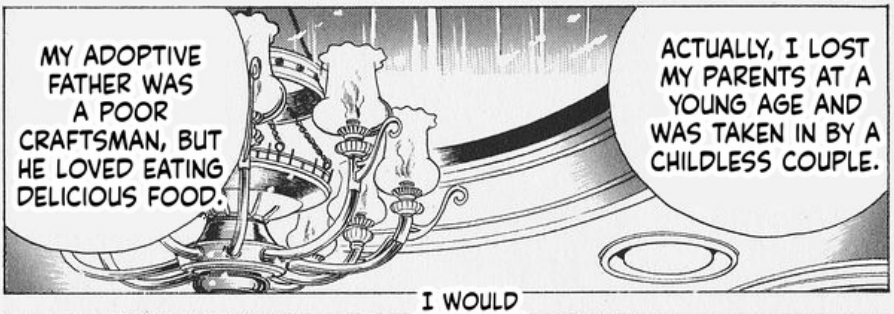
YAMAOKA-KUN, PLEASE RESEARCH THIS THOROUGHLY.
UGH... YEEESS SIR.

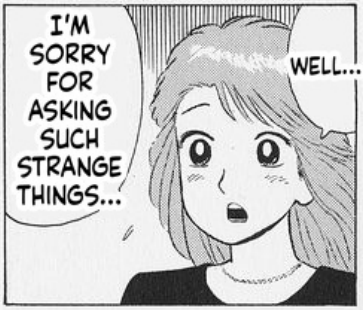
KURITA-SAN! DON'T LET PRESIDENT DAN GET AWAY!

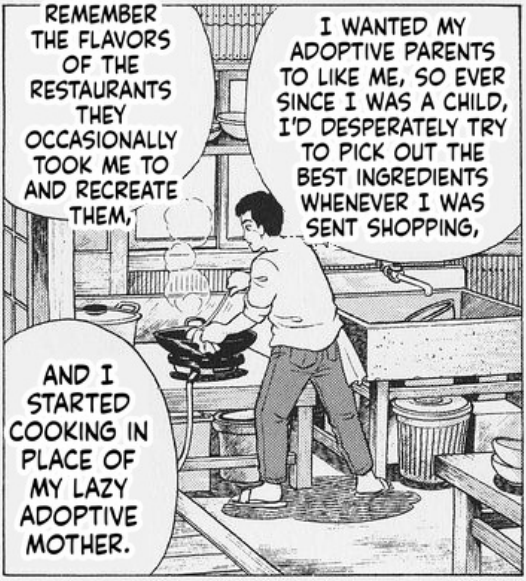

WILL YOU LEAVE TODAY'S MENU TO ME?

12


I HEARD YOU'RE A COMPUTER GENIUS, MR. DAN.
IT'S INTERESTING THAT SOMEONE LIKE YOU HAS COOKING AS A HOBBY.
HAHAHA.
THE CHEF HERE IS A FRIEND OF MINE, SO I ORDERED A SPECIAL MEAL.
OH, I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO IT.


MY ADOPTIVE FATHER WAS A POOR CRAFTSMAN, BUT HE LOVED EATING DELICIOUS FOOD.
ACTUALLY, I LOST MY PARENTS AT A YOUNG AGE AND WAS TAKEN IN BY A CHILDLESS COUPLE.


I'M SORRY FOR ASKING SUCH STRANGE THINGS...
WELL...


I WOULD REMEMBER THE FLAVORS OF THE RESTAURANTS THEY OCCASIONALLY TOOK ME TO AND RECREATE THEM,
I WANTED MY ADOPTIVE PARENTS TO LIKE ME, SO EVER SINCE I WAS A CHILD, I'D DESPERATELY TRY TO PICK OUT THE BEST INGREDIENTS WHENEVER I WAS SENT SHOPPING,
AND I STARTED COOKING IN PLACE OF MY LAZY ADOPTIVE MOTHER.

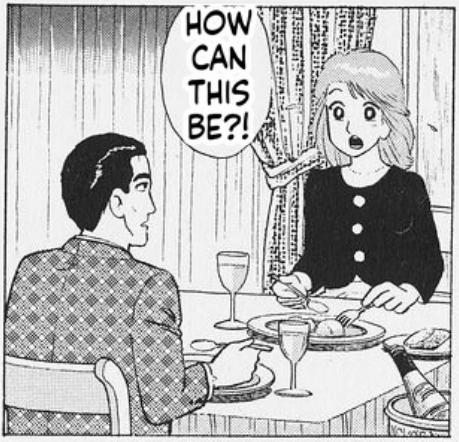
NO, I DON'T MIND AT ALL.

13

YES, I'D LOVE THAT...

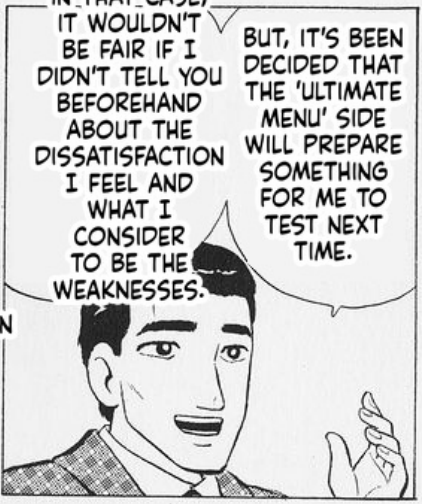
I'D LIKE TO SHOW OFF MY COOKING SKILLS FOR YOU SOMETIME SOON, MS. KURITA.

BECAUSE I WANT YOU TO KNOW THE REAL ME, MS. KURITA...
EH?


HOW CAN THIS BE?!

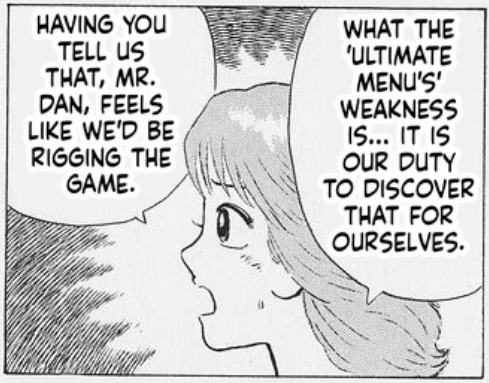
THE REASON I INVITED YOU HERE TODAY, MS. KURITA,
ONE REASON IS TO TELL YOU WHAT KIND OF DISSATISFACTION I HOLD TOWARD THE 'ULTIMATE MENU'.

WHILE THAT WOULD BE SOMETHING TO BE VERY GRATEFUL FOR...

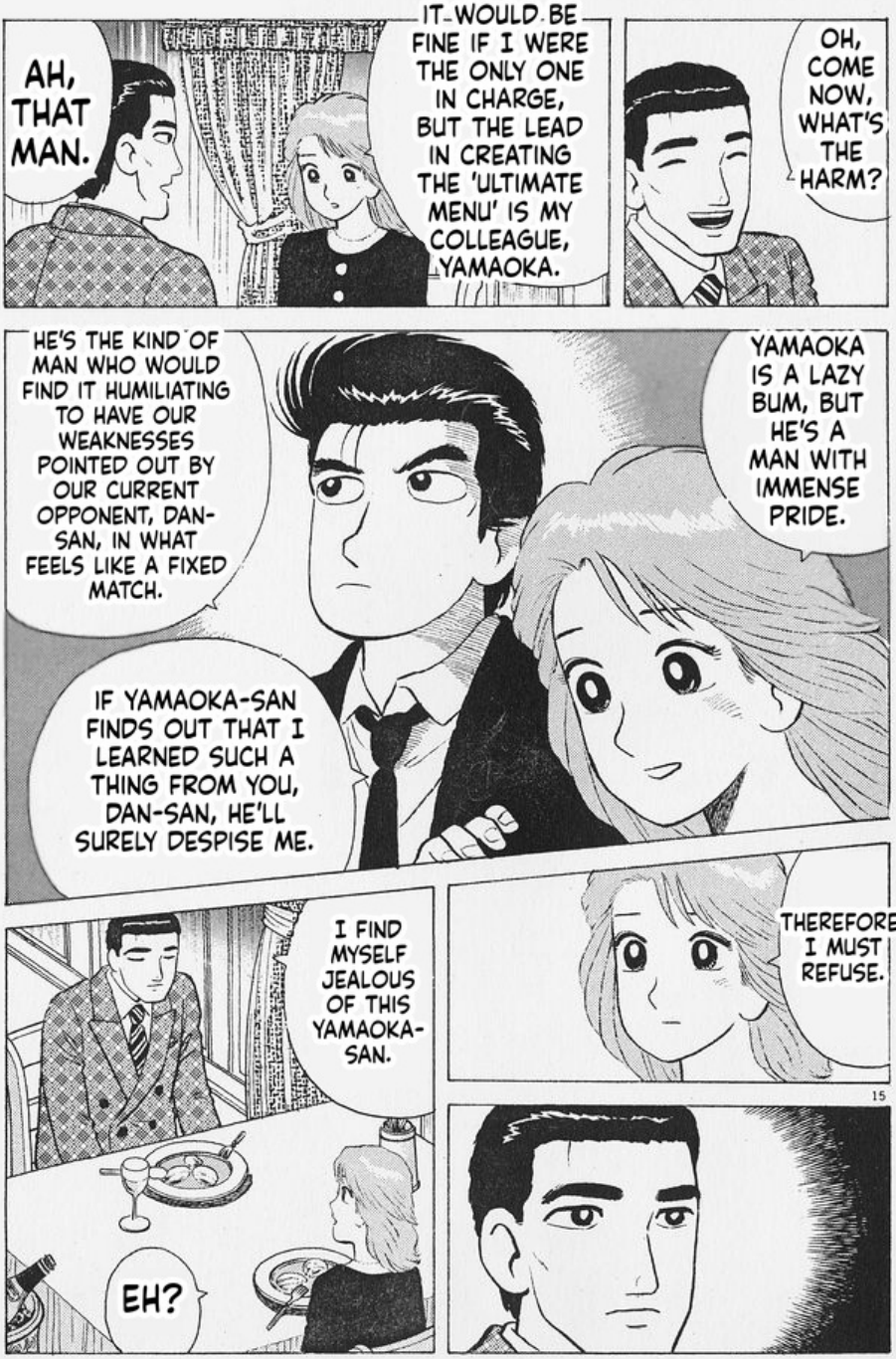

IN THAT CASE, IT WOULDN'T BE FAIR IF I DIDN'T TELL YOU BEFOREHAND ABOUT THE DISSATISFACTION I FEEL AND WHAT I CONSIDER TO BE THE WEAKNESSES.
BUT, IT'S BEEN DECIDED THAT THE 'ULTIMATE MENU' SIDE WILL PREPARE SOMETHING FOR ME TO TEST NEXT TIME.

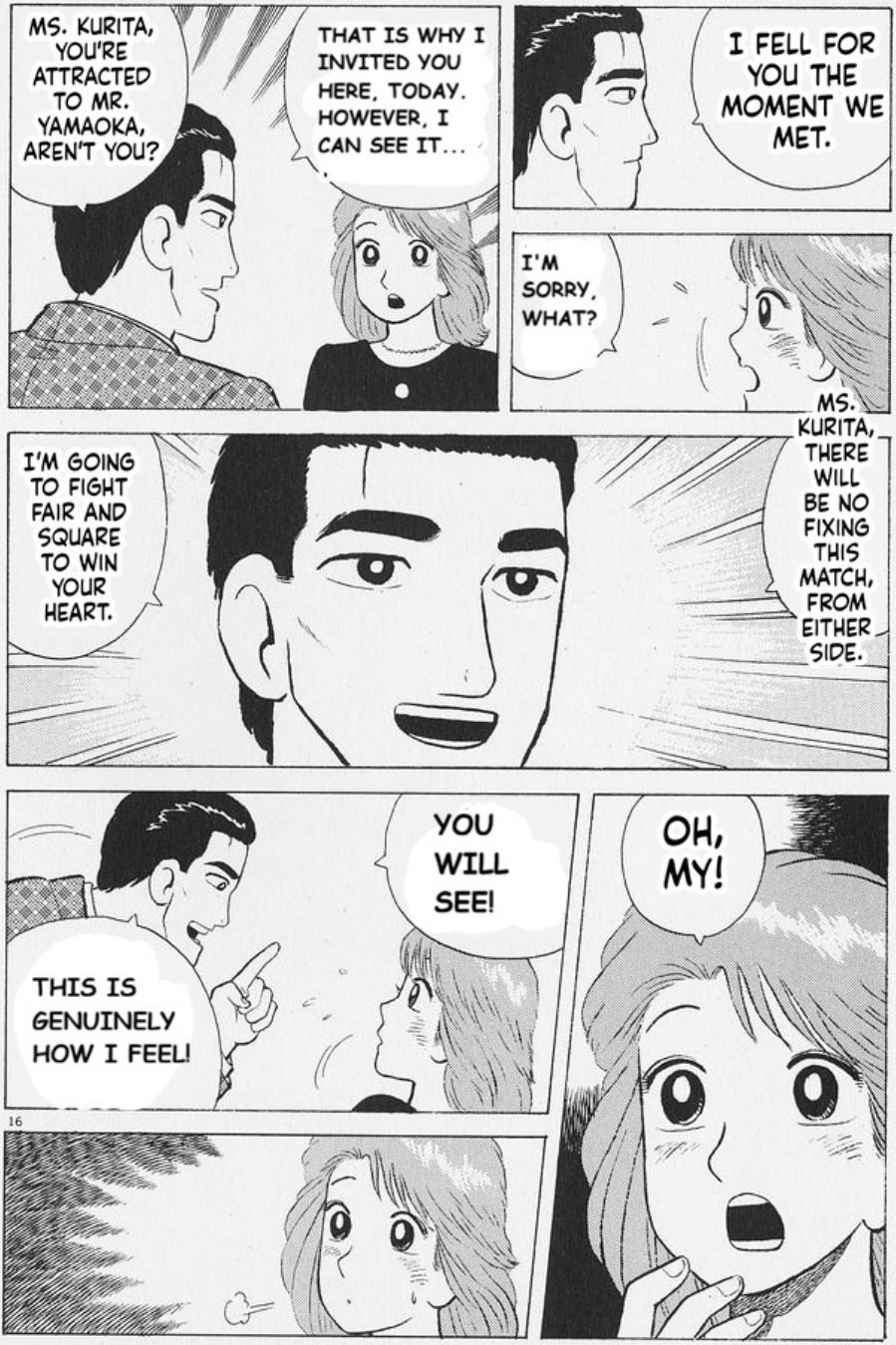
THE DISSATISFACTION I FELT WAS...

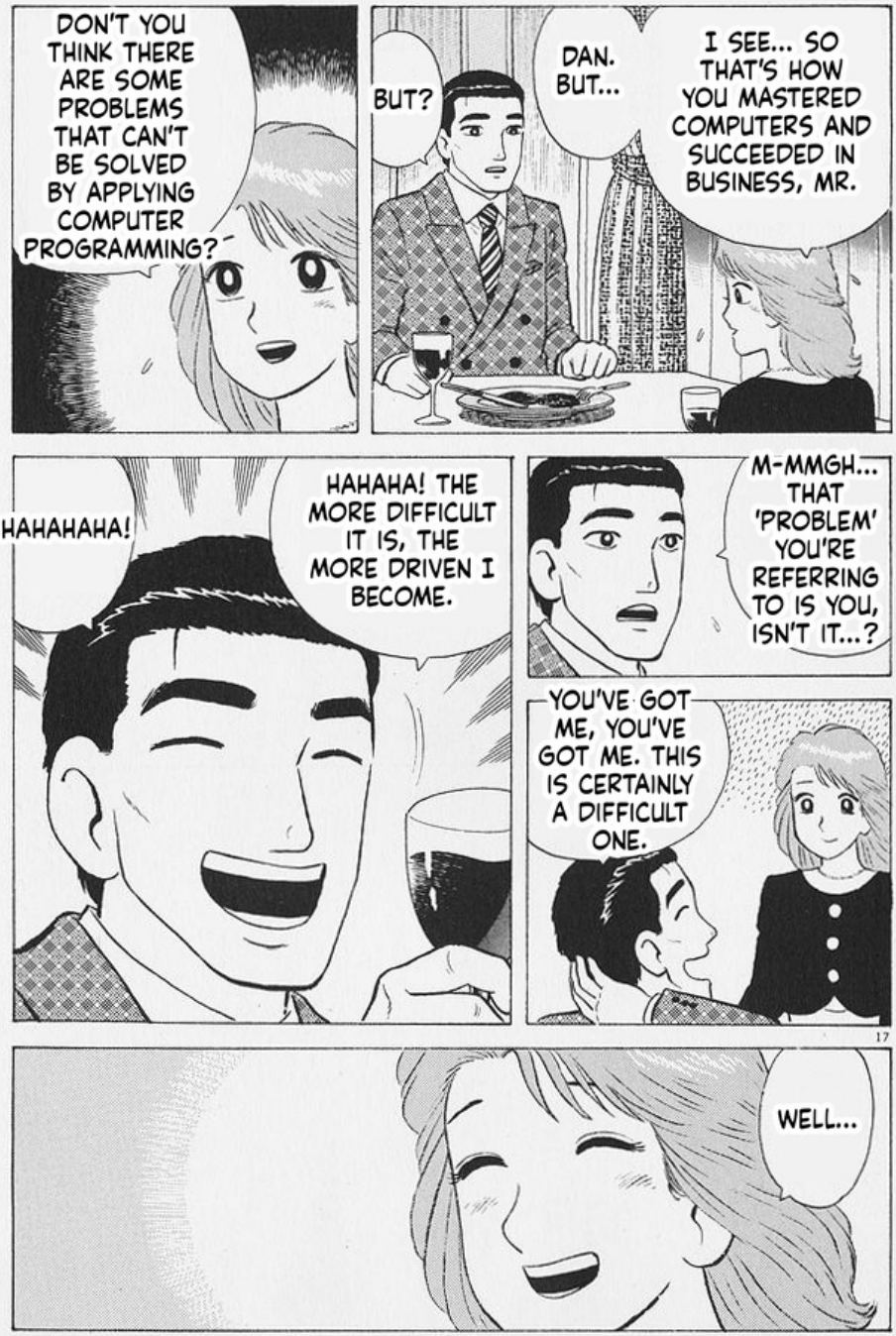
14


HAVING YOU TELL US THAT, MR. DAN, FEELS LIKE WE'D BE RIGGING THE GAME.
WHAT THE 'ULTIMATE MENU'S' WEAKNESS IS... IT IS OUR DUTY TO DISCOVER THAT FOR OURSELVES.

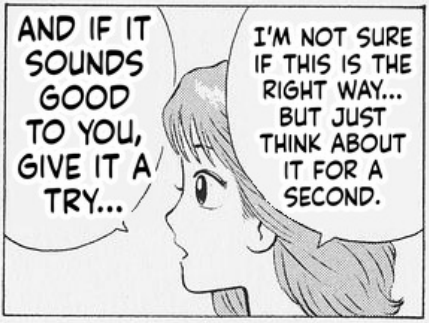
WAIT, PLEASE DON'T SAY ANYTHING MORE ABOUT THAT AFTER ALL.
EH?! WHY IS THAT?!


AH, THAT MAN.
IT WOULD BE FINE IF I WERE THE ONLY ONE IN CHARGE, BUT THE LEAD IN CREATING THE 'ULTIMATE MENU' IS MY COLLEAGUE, YAMAOKA.
OH, COME NOW, WHAT'S THE HARM?
HE'S THE KIND OF MAN WHO WOULD FIND IT HUMILIATING TO HAVE OUR WEAKNESSES POINTED OUT BY OUR CURRENT OPPONENT, DAN-SAN, IN WHAT FEELS LIKE A FIXED MATCH.
YAMAOKA IS A LAZY BUM, BUT HE'S A MAN WITH IMMENSE PRIDE.
IF YAMAOKA-SAN FINDS OUT THAT I LEARNED SUCH A THING FROM YOU, DAN-SAN, HE'LL SURELY DESPISE ME.
THEREFORE, I MUST REFUSE.
15
I FIND MYSELF JEALOUS OF THIS YAMAOKA-SAN.
EH?


MS. KURITA, YOU'RE ATTRACTED TO MR. YAMAOKA, AREN'T YOU?
THAT IS WHY I INVITED YOU HERE, TODAY. HOWEVER, I CAN SEE IT...
I FELL FOR YOU THE MOMENT WE MET.
I'M SORRY, WHAT?
MS. KURITA, THERE WILL BE NO FIXING THIS MATCH, FROM EITHER SIDE.
I'M GOING TO FIGHT FAIR AND SQUARE TO WIN YOUR HEART.
YOU WILL SEE!
THIS IS GENUINELY HOW I FEEL!
OH, MY!


DON'T YOU THINK THERE ARE SOME PROBLEMS THAT CAN'T BE SOLVED BY APPLYING COMPUTER PROGRAMMING?
BUT?
DAN. BUT...
I SEE... SO THAT'S HOW YOU MASTERED COMPUTERS AND SUCCEEDED IN BUSINESS, MR.
HAHAHAHA!
HAHAHA! THE MORE DIFFICULT IT IS, THE MORE DRIVEN I BECOME.
M-MMGH... THAT 'PROBLEM' YOU'RE REFERRING TO IS YOU, ISN'T IT...?
YOU'VE GOT ME, YOU'VE GOT ME. THIS IS CERTAINLY A DIFFICULT ONE.
17
WELL...

I SUPPOSE... THERE'S NO OTHER WAY...
IT CAN'T BE HELPED. FOR NOW, WE JUST HAVE TO SERVE WHAT WE'RE MOST CONFIDENT IN...
NO.
DID YOU FIGURE OUT WHAT THE WEAKNESS IS?
18
DID YOU FIND SOMETHING...?
PRESIDENT DAN WAS DISSATISFIED WITH THE 'ULTIMATE' SIDE'S DISH, BUT HE RAVED ABOUT THE 'SUPREME' SIDE'S DISH.
I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT IT.
I WONDER WHY THAT IS...


I'M NOT SURE IF THIS IS THE RIGHT WAY... BUT JUST THINK ABOUT IT FOR A SECOND.
AND IF IT SOUNDS GOOD TO YOU, GIVE IT A TRY...

YEAH! LET'S DO IT!

YOU MIGHT BE RIGHT ABOUT THAT...
I SEE...

DO YOU THINK IT'S WORTH A SHOT?

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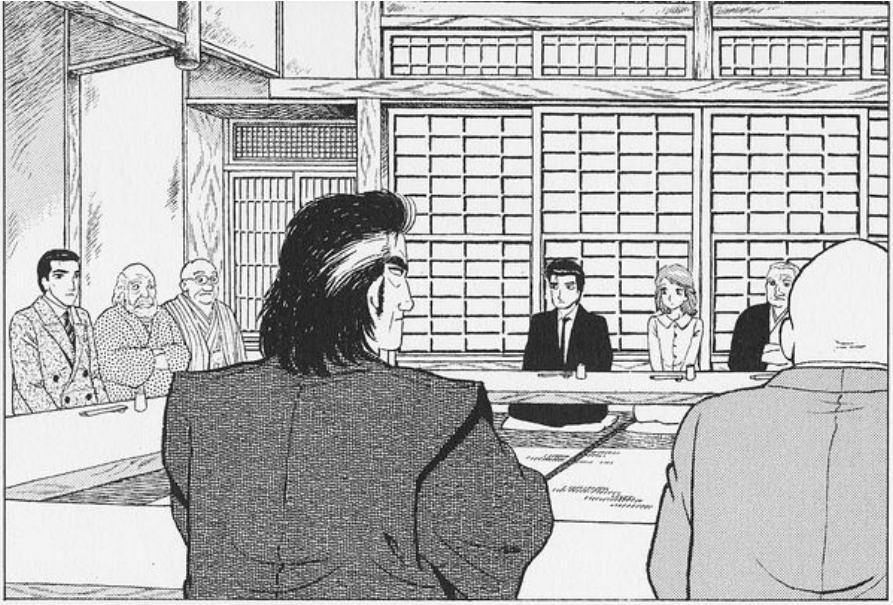
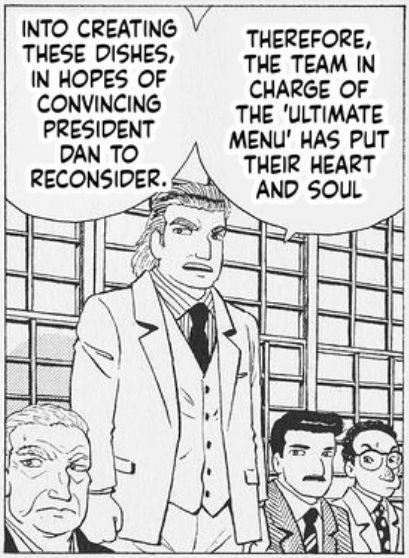


CONSEQUENTLY, HE HAS DECLARED THAT THE 'ULTIMATE' VS. 'SUPREME' BATTLE FEATURED IN WEEKLY TIME MAGAZINE WILL BE DISCONTINUED.
MR. DAN, THE NEW PRESIDENT OF DAIKEN PUBLISHING, FEELS THAT THE 'ULTIMATE MENU' DISHES HAVE FUNDAMENTAL WEAKNESSES, AND HIS DISSATISFACTION HAS BEEN GROWING.

20


INTO CREATING THESE DISHES, IN HOPES OF CONVINCING PRESIDENT DAN TO RECONSIDER.
THEREFORE, THE TEAM IN CHARGE OF THE 'ULTIMATE MENU' HAS PUT THEIR HEART AND SOUL

AS FAR AS OUR COMPANY IS CONCERNED, THIS IS AN EXTREMELY REGRETTABLE SITUATION.

BUT KOIZUMI-KUN, ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS?
THEN...
I SHALL TASTE THIS WITH AN OPEN MIND.
TIME MAGAZINE, AND TIME'S OWN MENU PROJECT WILL TAKE ITS PLACE.
THE 'ULTIMATE' WILL BE KICKED OUT OF THE CONFRONTATION BETWEEN 'ULTIMATE' AND 'SUPREME' IN WEEKLY
IF THAT HAPPENS, THE 'ULTIMATE MENU' WILL BECOME A LAUGHINGSTOCK. WE CAN'T POSSIBLY CONTINUE ANY FURTHER.
OWNER OHARA... IT SEEMS THE TIME HAS COME TO GIVE UP.
THEREFORE, HE WON'T LIKE THE DISHES WE'VE PREPARED FOR TODAY EITHER.
IT SEEMS NEITHER YAMADA NOR KURITA-KUN COULD GRASP WHAT THE WEAKNESS DIRECTOR DAN MENTIONED WAS.
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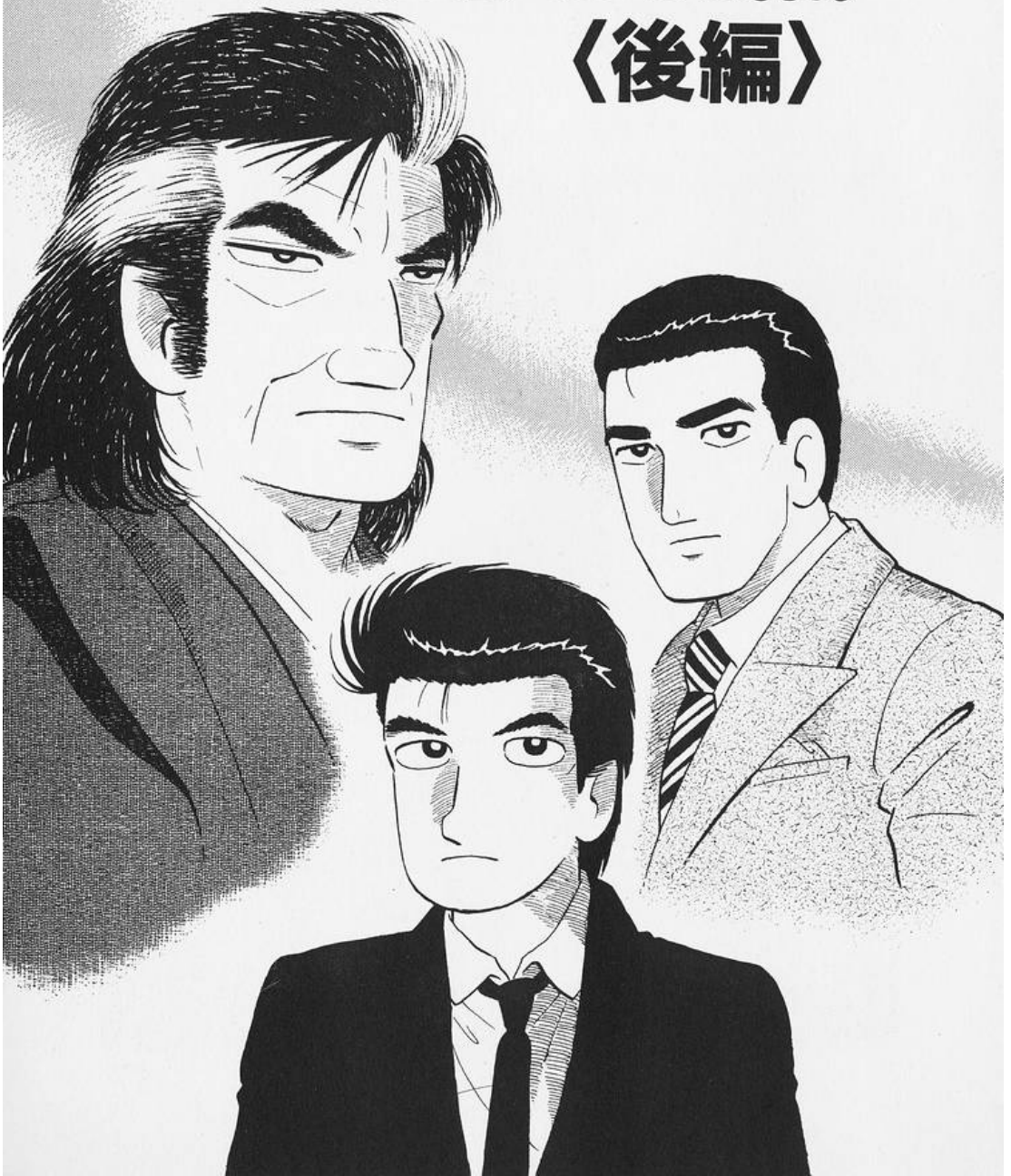
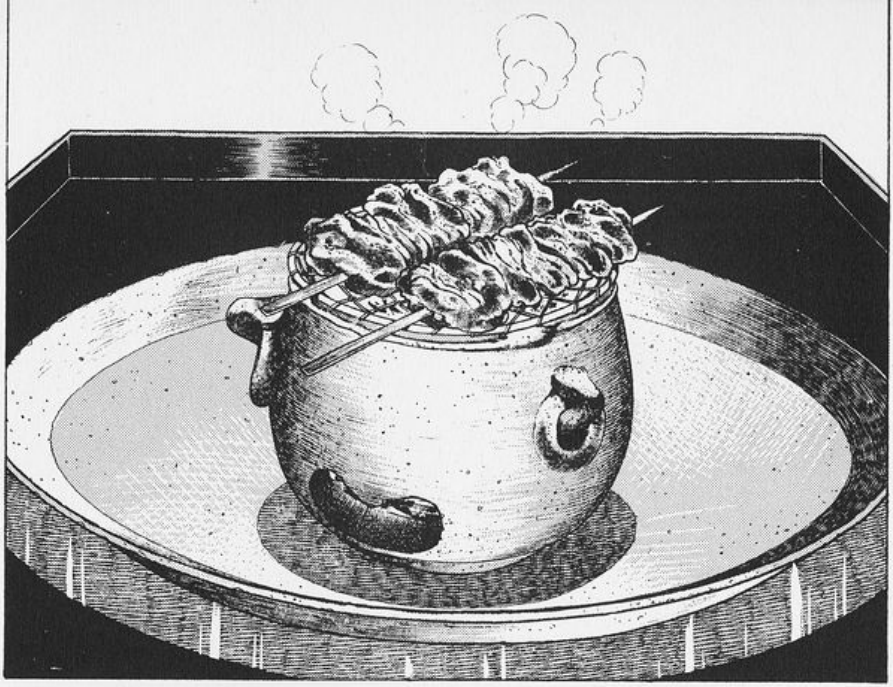
THEN, WHAT ABOUT THE 'ULTIMATE MENU' PROJECT FOR TOZAI NEWS'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY...?
THAT'S WHY I TOLD YOU, IT'S TIME TO GIVE UP.

スッ
NOW THEN, PLEASE ENJOY THE DISH WE HAVE PREPARED FOR YOU.
I CAN'T GIVE UP ON THIS!
I JUST CAN'T GIVE UP!
PRESIDENT OHARA, PLEASE CALM DOWN!
22

第7話
「究極」の弱点
〈後編〉





HAS YAMAOKA LOST HIS MIND?!
WH-WHAT, IT'S JUST YAKITORI!
!

2

IT'S OVER FOR US!
AFTER ALL THAT BUILD-UP, IT'S JUST YAKITORI?!

MMM!
HO...
THE SWEET FATTY JUICES JUST BURST IN YOUR MOUTH!
WHOA! THE SKIN IS SO CRISPY AND FRAGRANT!
WHAT IS THIS EXACTLY?
BONBOCHI?
HEY, THIS IS ACTUALLY PRETTY GOOD!
3
IT'S CHICKEN BONBOCHI.

THIS CHARCOAL-GRILLED TAIL MEAT WAS THE FAVORITE FOOD OF THE FOSTER FATHER WHO TOOK ME IN...
IT'S THE VERY TIP OF THE CHICKEN'S TAIL.
IT'S ALMOST ENTIRELY FAT.
I WENT AROUND TO SO MANY BUTCHERS LOOKING FOR THE BEST QUALITY, SOLELY OUT OF A DESIRE TO BE LIKED BY MY FOSTER FATHER...
EVEN WHEN MY LEGS FELT LIKE LEAD AND I WAS EXHAUSTED, SEEING THE LOOK OF JOY ON HIS FACE AS HE ATE THE TAIL MEAT I BOUGHT BROUGHT ME SUCH RELIEF...
MY FOSTER FATHER WAS A POOR CRAFTSMAN WITH NO EDUCATION, BUT HE WAS A MASTER AT FINDING THINGS THAT WERE CHEAP YET DELICIOUS.
4
BY COVERING IT, THE CHARCOAL DOESN'T FLARE UP MORE THAN NECESSARY, SO THE TAIL MEAT DOESN'T OVERCOOK AND STAYS AT THE PERFECT LEVEL OF DONENESS.
AND SUCH THOUGHTFULNESS... THEY'VE PLACED SMALL EMBERS AT THE BOTTOM OF THIS MINI-STOVE TO KEEP IT WARM.
BUT I HAVE NEVER TASTED TAIL MEAT AS DELICIOUS AS THIS.

VIBRANT GREEN GINKGO NUT RICE INSIDE A GREEN BAMBOO CYLINDER, HUH?
THIS IS BEAUTIFUL!
5

LOOK AT MR. DAN.
WHY ON EARTH DID SHIRO BRING THIS OUT...
EH?! IT'S THE FISH BACKBONE...
WHAT'S THIS OVER HERE?
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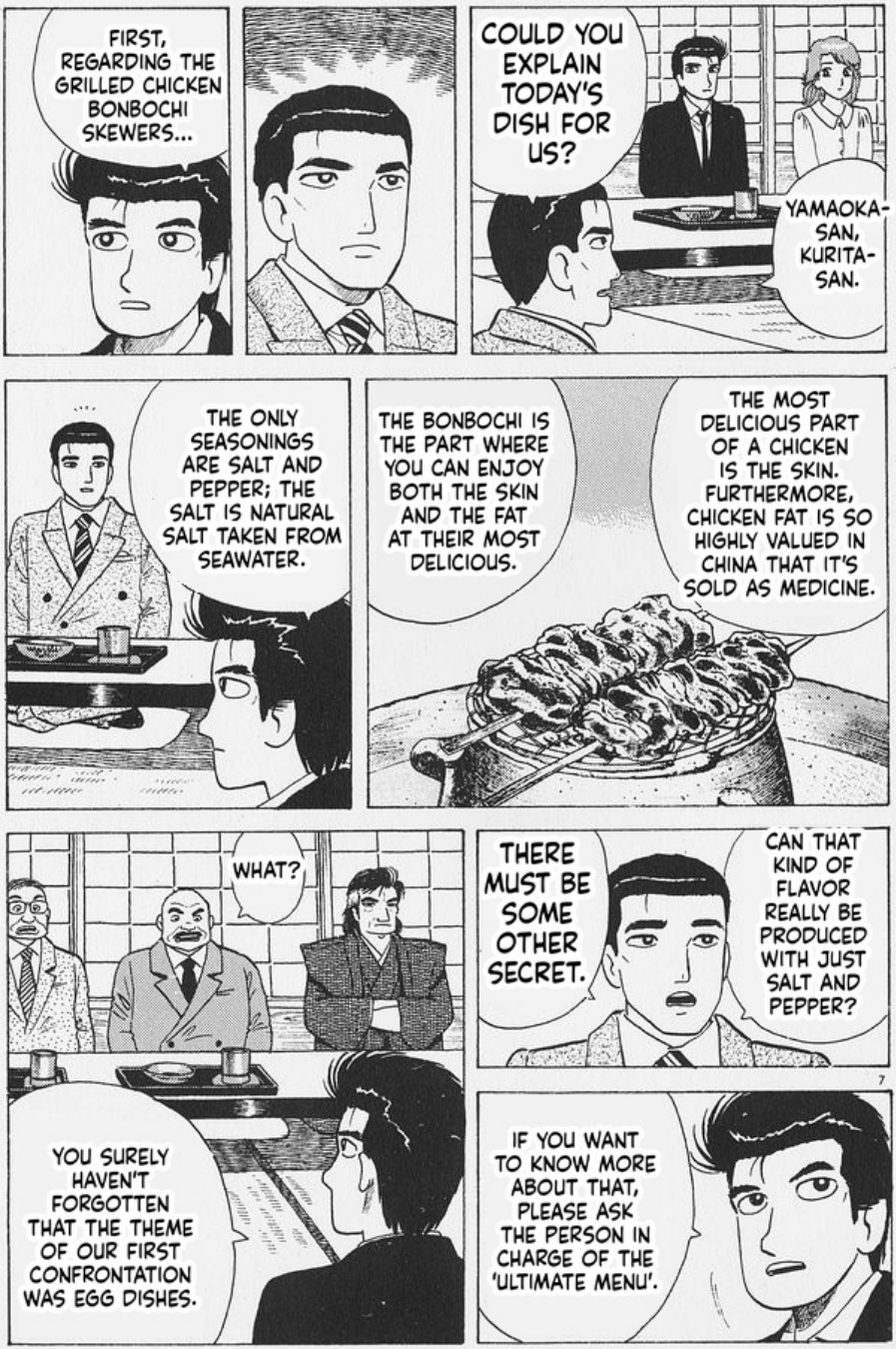
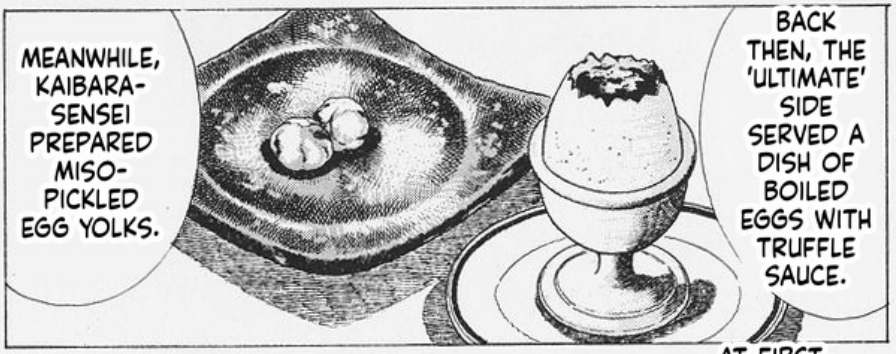
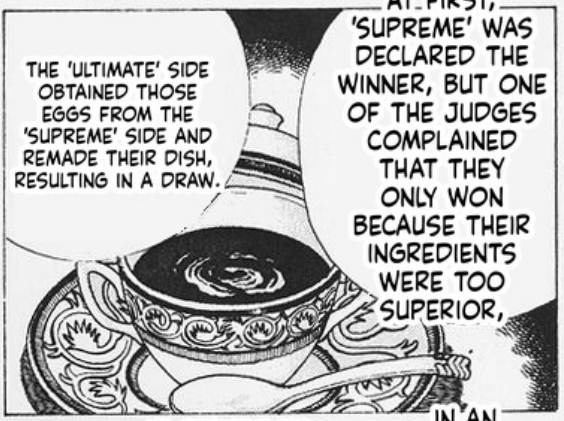
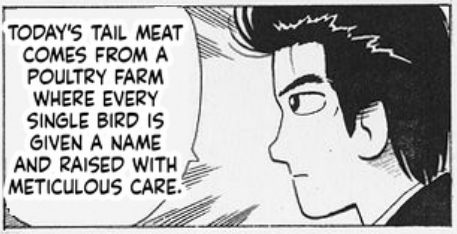
6
ポカン・・・
PRESIDENT... WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS?


FIRST, REGARDING THE GRILLED CHICKEN BONBOCHI SKEWERS...
COULD YOU EXPLAIN TODAY'S DISH FOR US?
YAMAOKA-SAN, KURITA-SAN.
THE ONLY SEASONINGS ARE SALT AND PEPPER; THE SALT IS NATURAL SALT TAKEN FROM SEAWATER.
THE BONBOCHI IS THE PART WHERE YOU CAN ENJOY BOTH THE SKIN AND THE FAT AT THEIR MOST DELICIOUS.
THE MOST DELICIOUS PART OF A CHICKEN IS THE SKIN. FURTHERMORE, CHICKEN FAT IS SO HIGHLY VALUED IN CHINA THAT IT'S SOLD AS MEDICINE.
WHAT?
YOU SURELY HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN THAT THE THEME OF OUR FIRST CONFRONTATION WAS EGG DISHES.
THERE MUST BE SOME OTHER SECRET.
CAN THAT KIND OF FLAVOR REALLY BE PRODUCED WITH JUST SALT AND PEPPER?
IF YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THAT, PLEASE ASK THE PERSON IN CHARGE OF THE 'ULTIMATE MENU'.


MEANWHILE, KAIBARA-SENSEI PREPARED MISO-PICKLED EGG YOLKS.
BACK THEN, THE 'ULTIMATE' SIDE SERVED A DISH OF BOILED EGGS WITH TRUFFLE SAUCE.

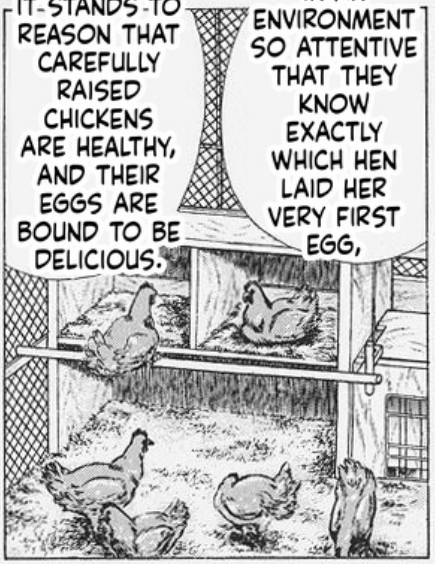
I BELIEVE YOU MENTIONED THEY WERE FIRST-LAY EGGS.
AND WHAT EXACTLY IS SO SPECIAL ABOUT THOSE EGGS?

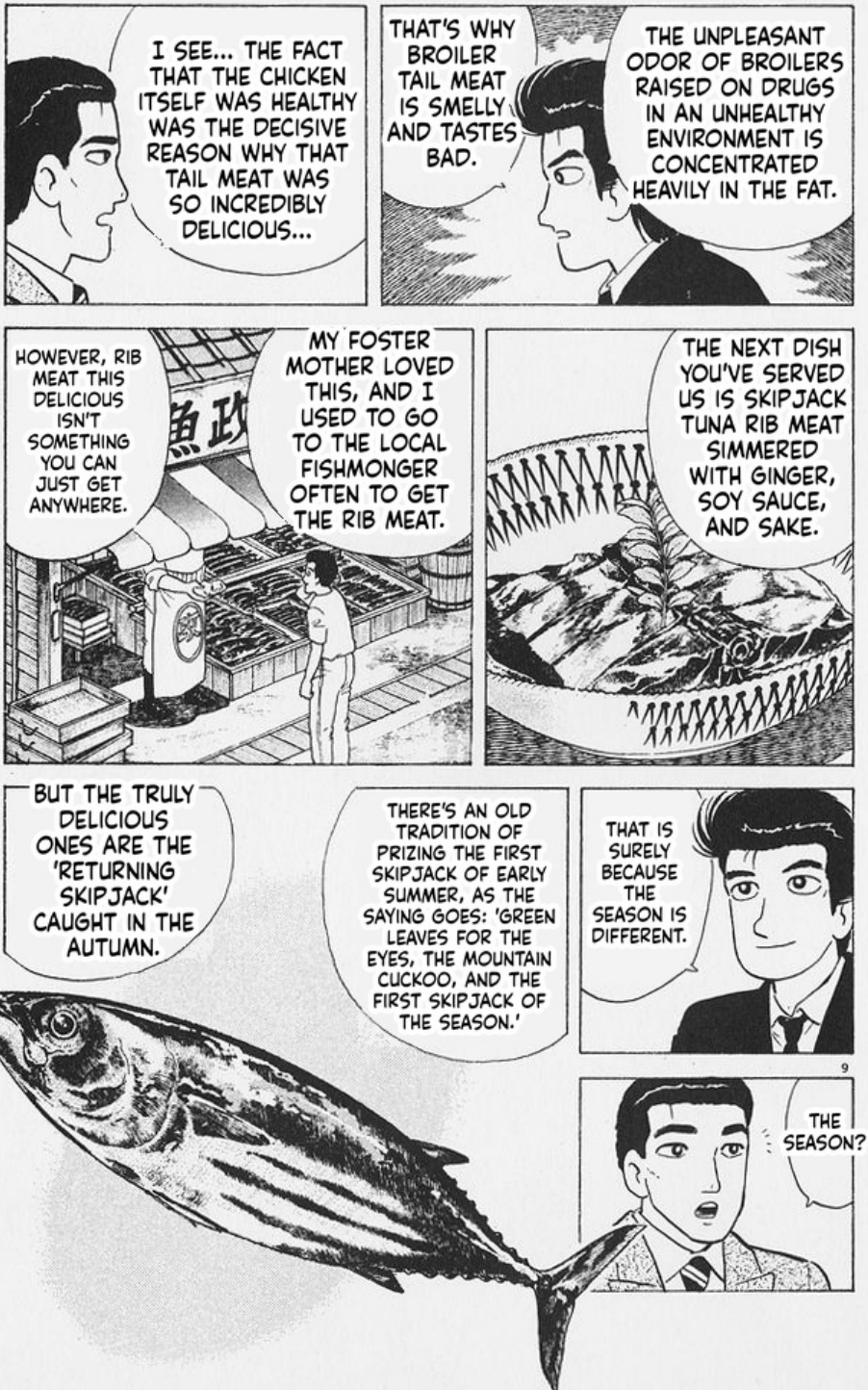

THE 'ULTIMATE' SIDE OBTAINED THOSE EGGS FROM THE 'SUPREME' SIDE AND REMADE THEIR DISH, RESULTING IN A DRAW.
AT FIRST, 'SUPREME' WAS DECLARED THE WINNER, BUT ONE OF THE JUDGES COMPLAINED THAT THEY ONLY WON BECAUSE THEIR INGREDIENTS WERE TOO SUPERIOR,


TODAY'S TAIL MEAT COMES FROM A POULTRY FARM WHERE EVERY SINGLE BIRD IS GIVEN A NAME AND RAISED WITH METICULOUS CARE.

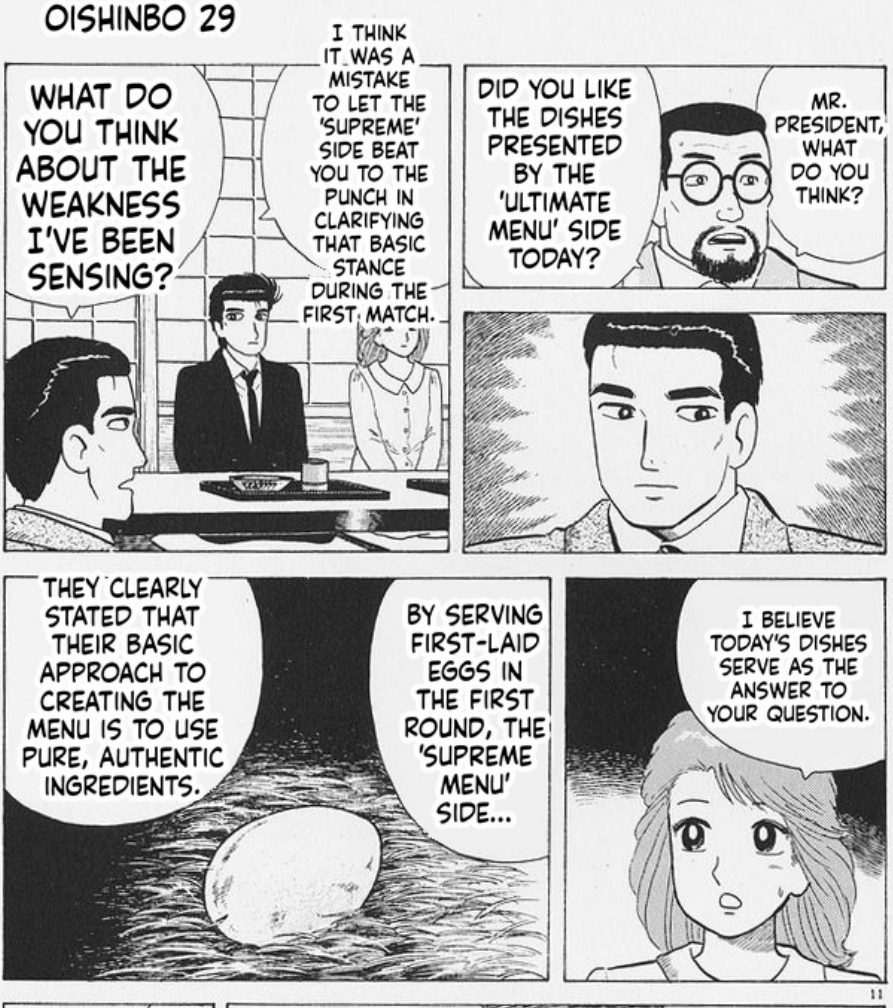
8

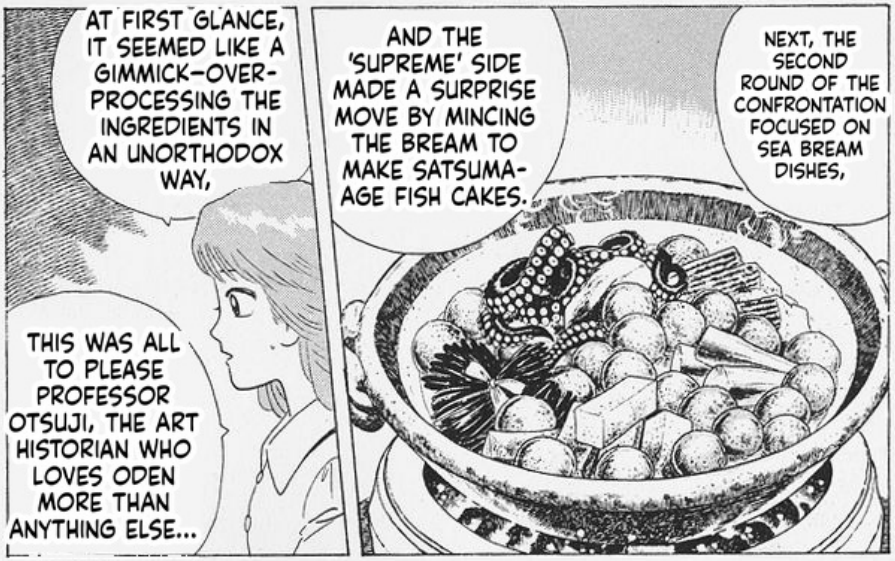
NO WAY!


IT STANDS TO REASON THAT CAREFULLY RAISED CHICKENS ARE HEALTHY, AND THEIR EGGS ARE BOUND TO BE DELICIOUS.
IN AN ENVIRONMENT SO ATTENTIVE THAT THEY KNOW EXACTLY WHICH HEN LAID HER VERY FIRST EGG,


I SEE... THE FACT THAT THE CHICKEN ITSELF WAS HEALTHY WAS THE DECISIVE REASON WHY THAT TAIL MEAT WAS SO INCREDIBLY DELICIOUS...
THAT'S WHY BROILER TAIL MEAT IS SMELLY AND TASTES BAD.
THE UNPLEASANT ODOR OF BROILERS RAISED ON DRUGS IN AN UNHEALTHY ENVIRONMENT IS CONCENTRATED HEAVILY IN THE FAT.
HOWEVER, RIB MEAT THIS DELICIOUS ISN'T SOMETHING YOU CAN JUST GET ANYWHERE.
魚政
MY FOSTER MOTHER LOVED THIS, AND I USED TO GO TO THE LOCAL FISHMONGER OFTEN TO GET THE RIB MEAT.
THE NEXT DISH YOU'VE SERVED US IS SKIPJACK TUNA RIB MEAT SIMMERED WITH GINGER, SOY SAUCE, AND SAKE.
BUT THE TRULY DELICIOUS ONES ARE THE 'RETURNING SKIPJACK' CAUGHT IN THE AUTUMN.
THERE'S AN OLD TRADITION OF PRIZING THE FIRST SKIPJACK OF EARLY SUMMER, AS THE SAYING GOES: 'GREEN LEAVES FOR THE EYES, THE MOUNTAIN CUCKOO, AND THE FIRST SKIPJACK OF THE SEASON.'
THAT IS SURELY BECAUSE THE SEASON IS DIFFERENT.
9
THE SEASON?

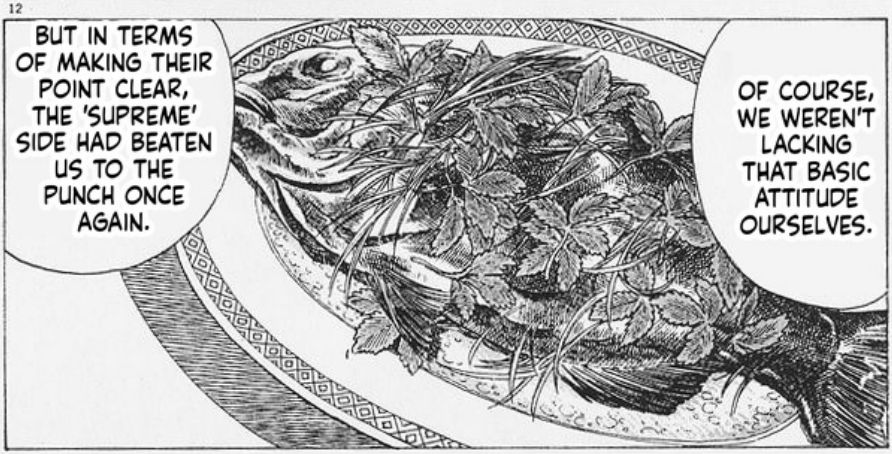
WHEN THE SEASON FOR THE FIRST BONITO OF THE YEAR ARRIVED, MY FOSTER MOTHER WOULD SAY IT WAS TOO EXPENSIVE TO AFFORD, SO SHE'D SEND ME TO GO ASK FOR THE SCRAPS INSTEAD.
THAT'S RIGHT...
AH...
THE DIFFERENCE IN TASTE IS MOST APPARENT IN THOSE SCRAPS.
THE FIRST BONITO IS TOO YOUNG AND LACKS FAT, BUT THE RETURNING BONITO IS FULLY GROWN AND RICH WITH OIL.
10 MY FOSTER MOTHER WOULD USE THOSE GINKGO NUTS TO MAKE SEASONED RICE FOR ME...
I HAD TO HANDLE THOSE HORRIBLY STINKY GINKGO FRUITS AND EXTRACT THE NUTS ALL BY MYSELF.
HOW NOSTALGIC...
WHEN AUTUMN CAME, I USED TO GO TO THE NEARBY PARK TO GATHER GINKGO NUTS.


I THINK IT WAS A MISTAKE TO LET THE 'SUPREME' SIDE BEAT YOU TO THE PUNCH IN CLARIFYING THAT BASIC STANCE DURING THE FIRST MATCH.
WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE WEAKNESS I'VE BEEN SENSING?
MR. PRESIDENT, WHAT DO YOU THINK?
DID YOU LIKE THE DISHES PRESENTED BY THE 'ULTIMATE MENU' SIDE TODAY?
BY SERVING FIRST-LAID EGGS IN THE FIRST ROUND, THE 'SUPREME MENU' SIDE...
THEY CLEARLY STATED THAT THEIR BASIC APPROACH TO CREATING THE MENU IS TO USE PURE, AUTHENTIC INGREDIENTS.
I BELIEVE TODAY'S DISHES SERVE AS THE ANSWER TO YOUR QUESTION.
11
HMM.
HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE DISSATISFACTION AND WEAKNESSES I'VE BEEN PERCEIVING FROM THE 'ULTIMATE MENU' SIDE?
OF COURSE, WE ALSO PRIORITIZED USING PURE INGREDIENTS WHEN CREATING THE 'ULTIMATE MENU,' BUT...

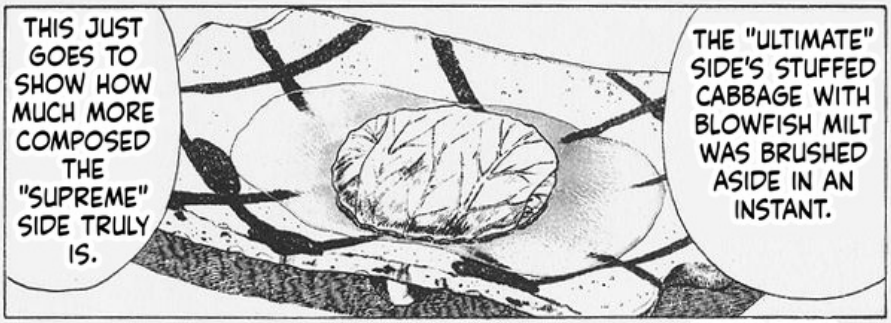

AT FIRST GLANCE, IT SEEMED LIKE A GIMMICK—OVER-PROCESSING THE INGREDIENTS IN AN UNORTHODOX WAY,
THIS WAS ALL TO PLEASE PROFESSOR OTSUJI, THE ART HISTORIAN WHO LOVES ODEN MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE...
AND THE 'SUPREME' SIDE MADE A SURPRISE MOVE BY MINCING THE BREAM TO MAKE SATSUMA-AGE FISH CAKES.
NEXT, THE SECOND ROUND OF THE CONFRONTATION FOCUSED ON SEA BREAM DISHES,

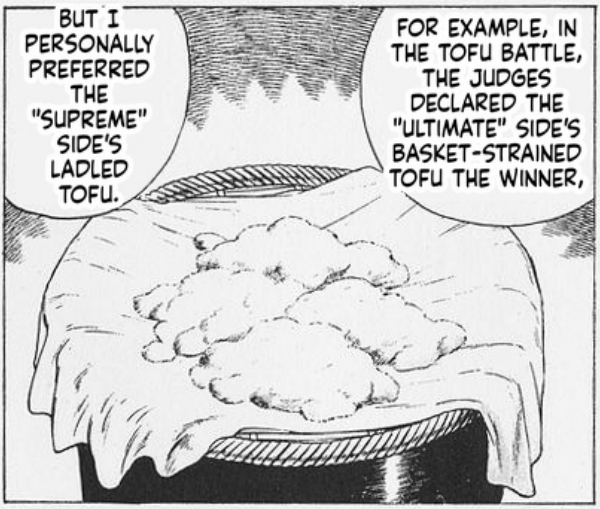
BUT SOLELY TO BRING JOY TO THE HEART OF THE PERSON EATING IT.
HERE, THE 'SUPREME' SIDE CLEARLY LAID OUT THEIR SECOND BASIC PRINCIPLE: THE PURPOSE OF COOKING IS NOT TO BOAST OF TECHNIQUE, NOR TO STICK TO TRADITION OR FORM,

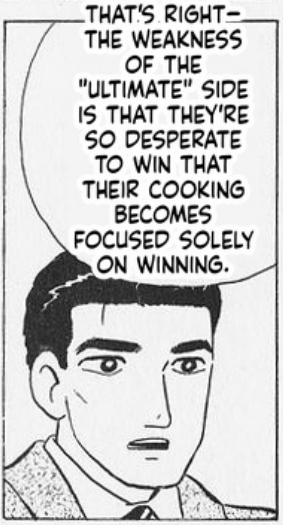
12


BUT IN TERMS OF MAKING THEIR POINT CLEAR, THE 'SUPREME' SIDE HAD BEATEN US TO THE PUNCH ONCE AGAIN.
OF COURSE, WE WEREN'T LACKING THAT BASIC ATTITUDE OURSELVES.

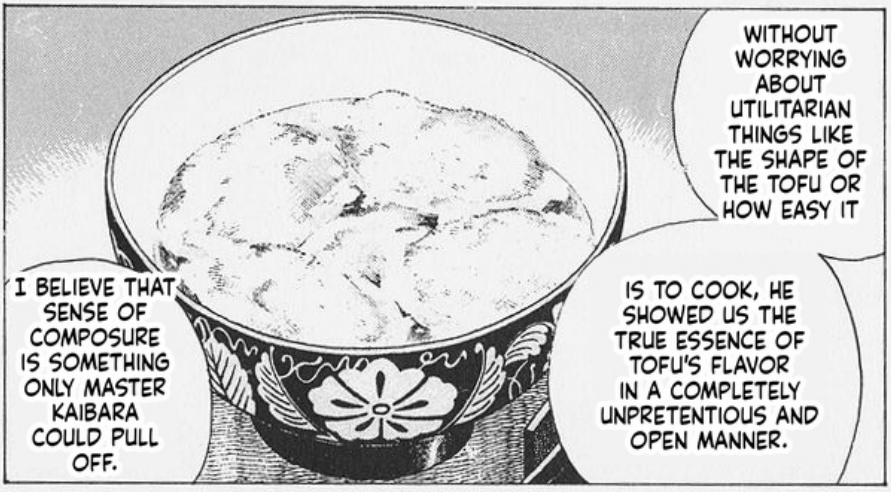
PERHAPS THE DISSATISFACTION FELT BY PRESIDENT DAN LIES SOMEWHERE IN THAT REGARD?
EXACTLY, THAT IS CORRECT.
BECAUSE YOU FAILED TO CLARIFY YOUR BASIC STANCE DURING THE FIRST TWO ROUNDS, YOU GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THE 'ULTIMATE MENU' SIDE MERELY BOASTS ABOUT COOKING TECHNIQUES, YET REMAINS TRAPPED BY CONVENTIONAL IDEAS IN HOW YOU USE INGREDIENTS.
DEPENDING ON THE PERSON, YOU MAY HAVE EVEN PLANTED THAT IMPRESSION.
IT WAS BECAUSE YOUR RIVALRY WITH MR. YUZAN KAIBARA WAS SO INTENSE THAT YOUR OBSESSION WITH WINNING CAUSED YOU TO LOSE YOUR COMPOSURE.
AND AS FOR THE WEAKNESS OF THE 'ULTIMATE' SIDE...
13
THE 'SUPREME' SIDE SERVED THE CABBAGE CORE EXACTLY AS IT WAS.
FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE THIRD ROUND WHERE VEGETABLES WERE THE THEME,


THIS JUST GOES TO SHOW HOW MUCH MORE COMPOSED THE "SUPREME" SIDE TRULY IS.
THE "ULTIMATE" SIDE'S STUFFED CABBAGE WITH BLOWFISH MILT WAS BRUSHED ASIDE IN AN INSTANT.

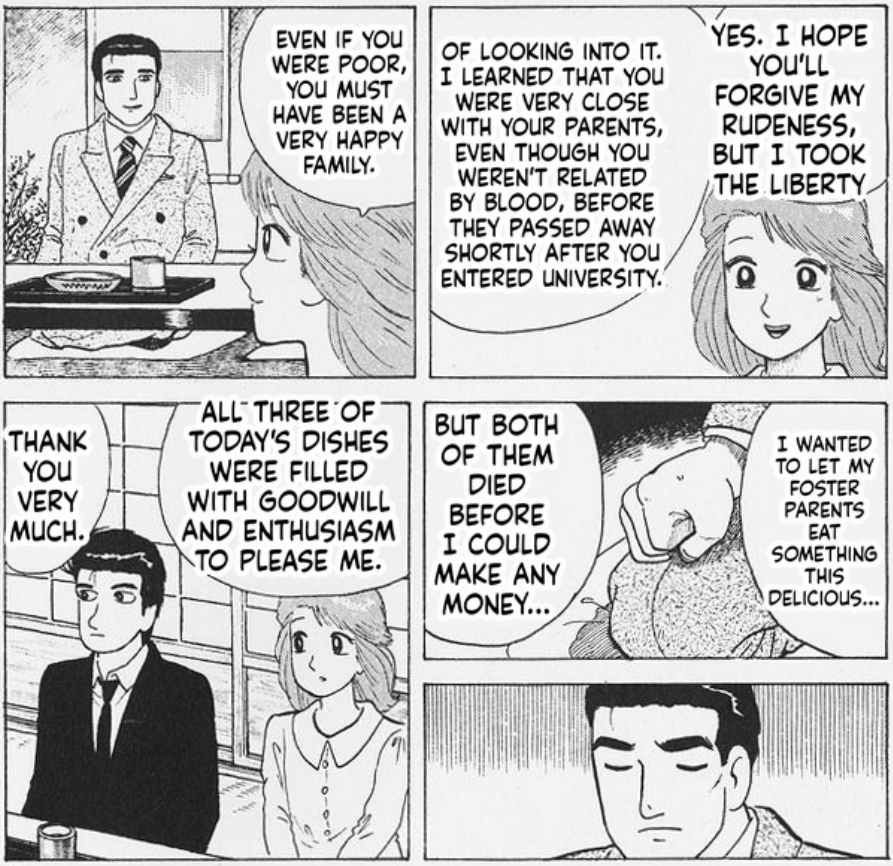

BUT I PERSONALLY PREFERRED THE "SUPREME" SIDE'S LADLED TOFU.
FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE TOFU BATTLE, THE JUDGES DECLARED THE "ULTIMATE" SIDE'S BASKET-STRAINED TOFU THE WINNER,


THAT'S RIGHT— THE WEAKNESS OF THE "ULTIMATE" SIDE IS THAT THEY'RE SO DESPERATE TO WIN THAT THEIR COOKING BECOMES FOCUSED SOLELY ON WINNING.

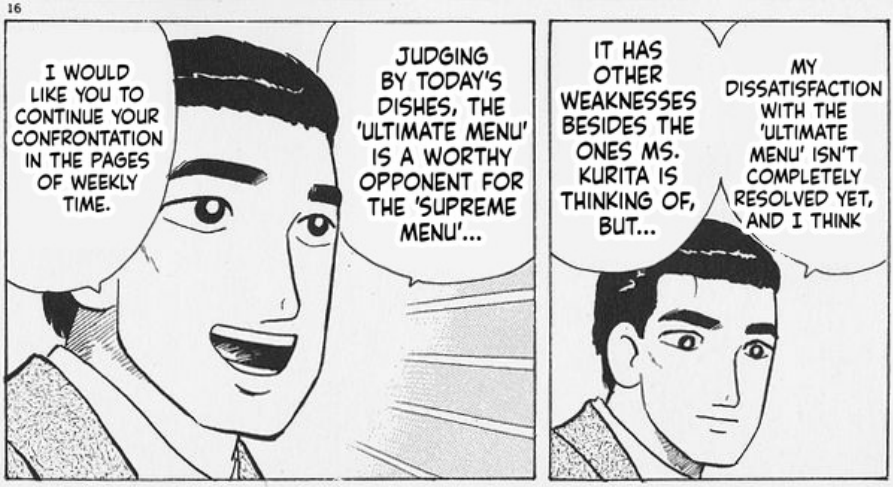
14


WITHOUT WORRYING ABOUT UTILITARIAN THINGS LIKE THE SHAPE OF THE TOFU OR HOW EASY IT
IS TO COOK, HE SHOWED US THE TRUE ESSENCE OF TOFU'S FLAVOR IN A COMPLETELY UNPRETENTIOUS AND OPEN MANNER.
I BELIEVE THAT SENSE OF COMPOSURE IS SOMETHING ONLY MASTER KAIBARA COULD PULL OFF.

I SEE...
NOW THEN, PLEASE LOOK BACK ON THE DISHES SERVED TODAY.
IT WASN'T ABOUT BEING ECCENTRIC; IT WAS ALL TO MAKE ME HAPPY...
AND DESPITE USING SEASONAL 'DESCENDING BONITO,' YOU ONLY SERVED THE FATTY MEAT SCRAPED FROM THE BONES.
IT'S SIMPLE, BUT YOU COOKED IT IN A WAY THAT BRINGS OUT THE ESSENTIAL FLAVOR OF THE INGREDIENTS.
THE TAIL MEAT SKEWERS WERE MADE WITH PURE INGREDIENTS,
HOW I LIVED WITH MY FOSTER PARENTS, AND WHAT KIND OF THINGS I USED TO EAT.
EVEN SO, MS. KURITA, YOU CERTAINLY DID YOUR RESEARCH ON ME, DIDN'T YOU?
IT'S SIMPLE, BUT BY TRUSTING THE DELICIOUSNESS OF THE GINKGO NUTS AND THE RICE, ONE CAN SEE A VERY COMPOSED ATTITUDE.
FURTHERMORE,[15] THE GINKGO NUT RICE— THE RICE AND GINKGO NUTS ARE STEAMED TOGETHER INSIDE A BAMBOO TUBE.


EVEN IF YOU WERE POOR, YOU MUST HAVE BEEN A VERY HAPPY FAMILY.
OF LOOKING INTO IT. I LEARNED THAT YOU WERE VERY CLOSE WITH YOUR PARENTS, EVEN THOUGH YOU WEREN'T RELATED BY BLOOD, BEFORE THEY PASSED AWAY SHORTLY AFTER YOU ENTERED UNIVERSITY.
YES. I HOPE YOU'LL FORGIVE MY RUDENESS, BUT I TOOK THE LIBERTY
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
ALL THREE OF TODAY'S DISHES WERE FILLED WITH GOODWILL AND ENTHUSIASM TO PLEASE ME.
BUT BOTH OF THEM DIED BEFORE I COULD MAKE ANY MONEY...
I WANTED TO LET MY FOSTER PARENTS EAT SOMETHING THIS DELICIOUS...

16


I WOULD LIKE YOU TO CONTINUE YOUR CONFRONTATION IN THE PAGES OF WEEKLY TIME.
JUDGING BY TODAY'S DISHES, THE 'ULTIMATE MENU' IS A WORTHY OPPONENT FOR THE 'SUPREME MENU'...
IT HAS OTHER WEAKNESSES BESIDES THE ONES MS. KURITA IS THINKING OF, BUT...
MY DISSATISFACTION WITH THE 'ULTIMATE MENU' ISN'T COMPLETELY RESOLVED YET, AND I THINK

WE DID IT!
THIS SAVES OUR COMPANY'S FACE!
PHEW, THAT SETTLED THINGS NICELY.
FOR A MOMENT THERE, I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT WOULD HAPPEN...
BUT –
HEH HEH HEH.
WHAT'S WRONG, SHIRO? YOU LOOK RATHER GLOOMY.
WELL, IT'S NO WONDER YOU'RE MAKING SUCH A FACE.
TODAY'S INCIDENT WAS A DECLARATION OF DEFEAT, ADMITTING THAT YOU HAVE COMPLETELY SURRENDERED TO THE 'SUPREME MENU'.

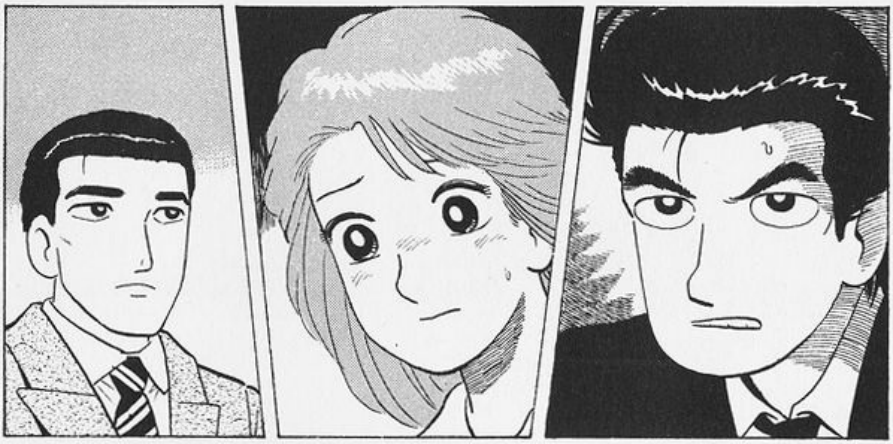
YOU DECLARED THAT YOU WOULD FOLLOW THOSE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF OURS.
USING PURE INGREDIENTS, FOCUSING ONLY ON DELIGHTING THE DINER, NOT OBSESSING OVER WINNING OR LOSING, AND LEISURELY PURSUING THE ESSENCE OF DELICIOUSNESS...
WHAT DID YOU SAY!
A DECLARATION OF DEFEAT?!
IF THIS ISN'T A DECLARATION OF DEFEAT, THEN WHAT IS?
THE BONITO NAKAOCHI AND GINKGO NUT RICE ALSO TRACED THE SAME SPIRIT I USED TO ENTERTAIN MASTER OTSUJI.
FURTHERMORE, THE BONBOCHI SKEWERS FOLLOWED OUR LEAD STARTING FROM THE SOURCING OF INGREDIENTS, AND THE CULINARY CONCEPT WAS MODELED AFTER OURS.
NO!
18
I TOLD YOU THAT WAS OUR FUNDAMENTAL STANDARD.
WHILE WE DIDN'T EXPLICITLY STATE IN THE ARENA OF THE 'SUPREME' CHALLENGE THAT WE FOCUS SOLELY ON PURE INGREDIENTS AND THE JOY OF EATING,

THE ONLY THING THAT MATTERS IS WHAT YOU DID AND SAID ON THE STAGE OF YOUR CONFRONTATION WITH THE 'SUPREME'.
WHAT'S THE POINT OF MAKING A FUSS NOW, SAYING THIS OR THAT ELSEWHERE, OR CLAIMING YOU ACTUALLY MEANT SOMETHING ELSE?

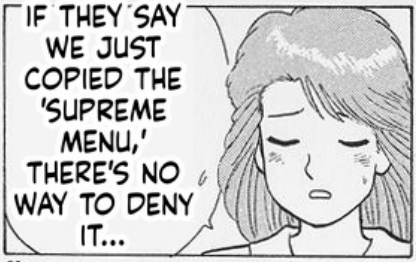
AND EACH TIME, YOU MAY ISSUE YOUR DECLARATION OF DEFEAT.
WELL, IF YOU WANT TO HUMILIATE YOURSELVES EVEN FURTHER, THEN STEP INTO THE RING OF WEEKLY TIME.

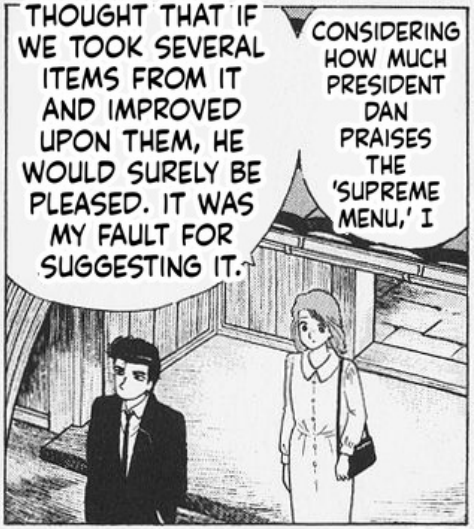
UGH...

DAMN IT...



井屋
I'M SORRY, IT WAS ALL MY FAULT...


IF THEY SAY WE JUST COPIED THE 'SUPREME MENU,' THERE'S NO WAY TO DENY IT...


THOUGHT THAT IF WE TOOK SEVERAL ITEMS FROM IT AND IMPROVED UPON THEM, HE WOULD SURELY BE PLEASED. IT WAS MY FAULT FOR SUGGESTING IT.
CONSIDERING HOW MUCH PRESIDENT DAN PRAISES THE 'SUPREME MENU,' I

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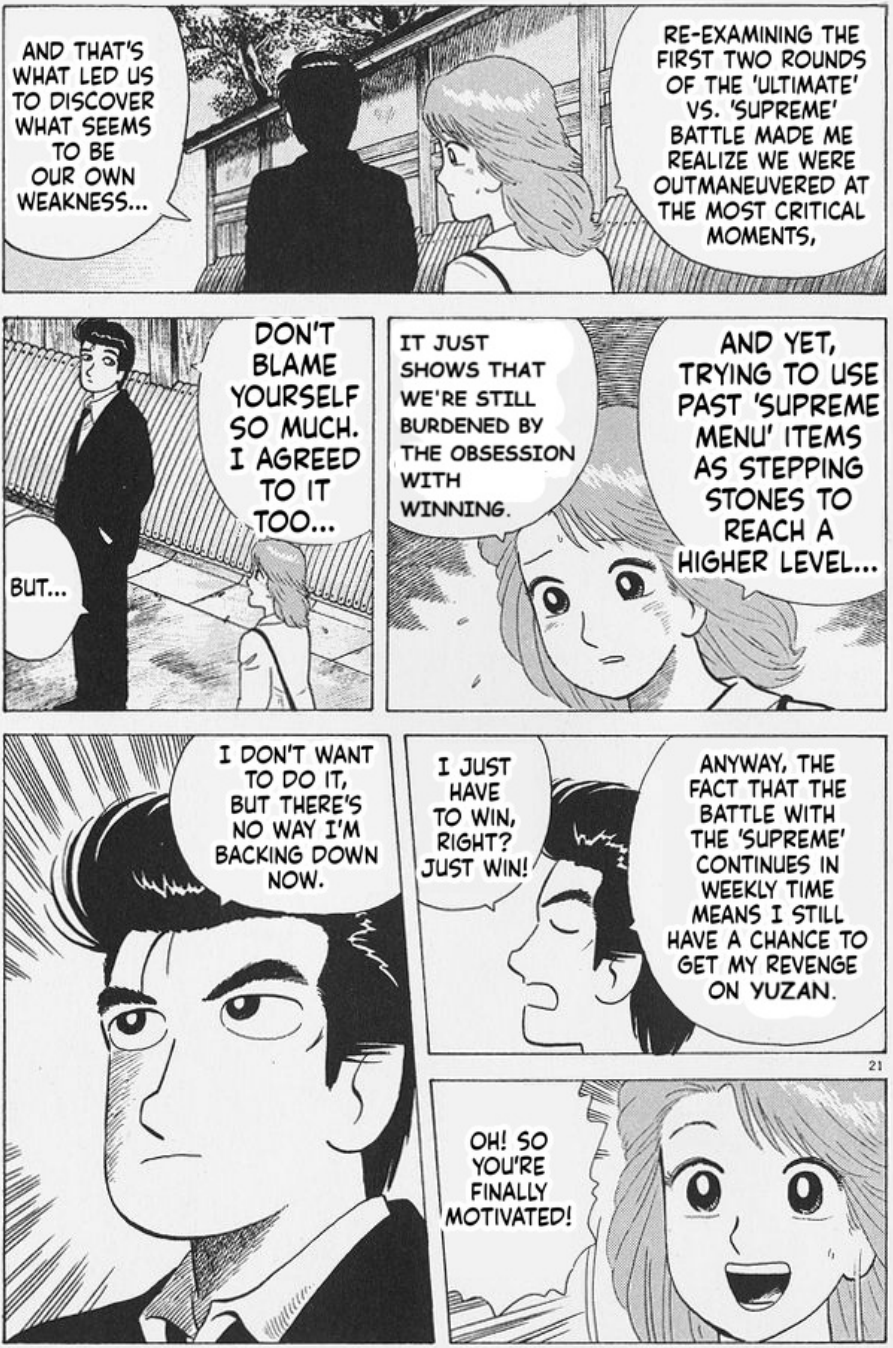
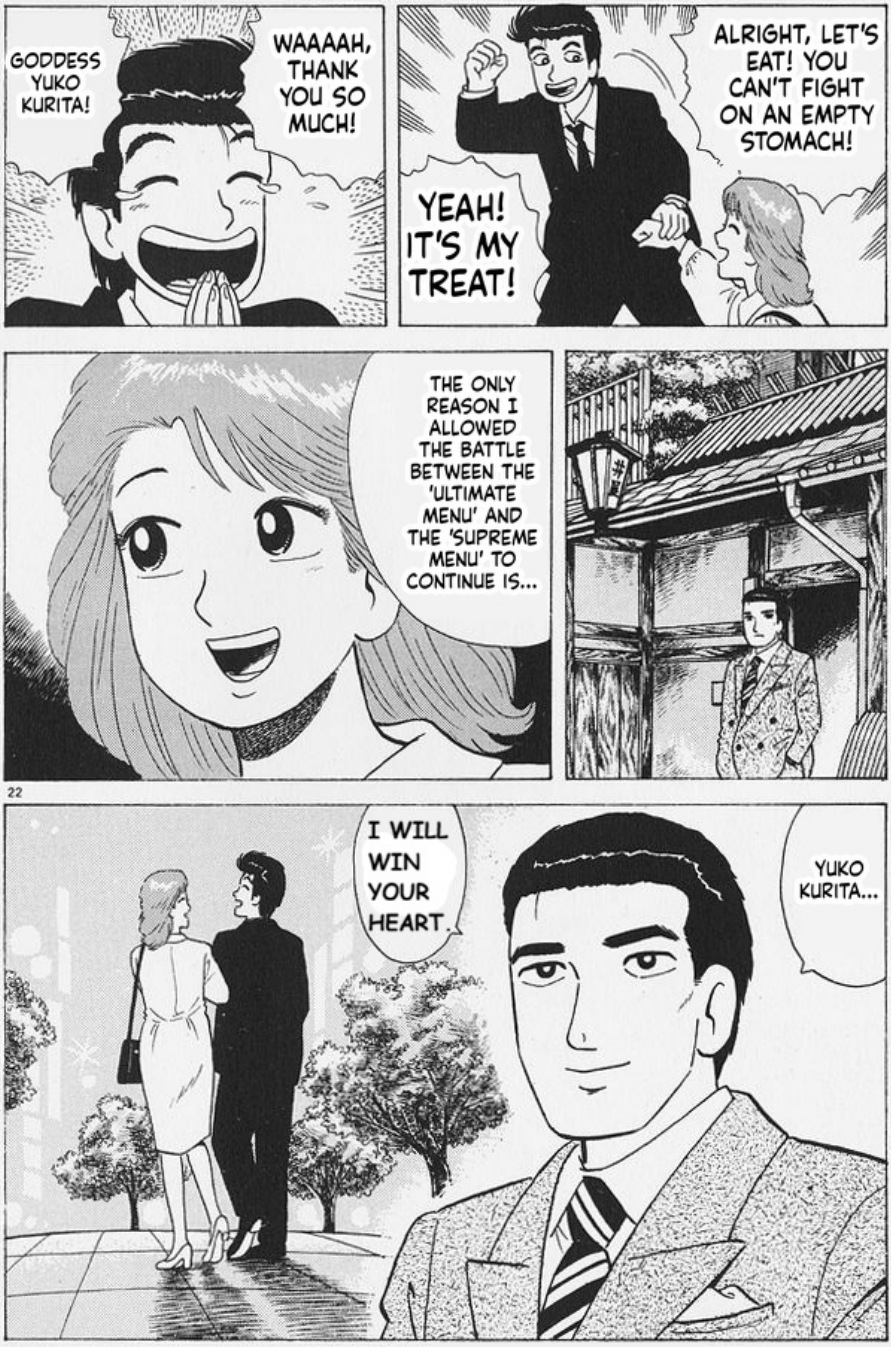

AND THAT'S WHAT LED US TO DISCOVER WHAT SEEMS TO BE OUR OWN WEAKNESS...
RE-EXAMINING THE FIRST TWO ROUNDS OF THE 'ULTIMATE' VS. 'SUPREME' BATTLE MADE ME REALIZE WE WERE OUTMANEUVERED AT THE MOST CRITICAL MOMENTS,
DON'T BLAME YOURSELF SO MUCH. I AGREED TO IT TOO...
BUT...
IT JUST SHOWS THAT WE'RE STILL BURDENED BY THE OBSESSION WITH WINNING.
AND YET, TRYING TO USE PAST 'SUPREME MENU' ITEMS AS STEPPING STONES TO REACH A HIGHER LEVEL...
I DON'T WANT TO DO IT, BUT THERE'S NO WAY I'M BACKING DOWN NOW.
I JUST HAVE TO WIN, RIGHT? JUST WIN!
ANYWAY, THE FACT THAT THE BATTLE WITH THE 'SUPREME' CONTINUES IN WEEKLY TIME MEANS I STILL HAVE A CHANCE TO GET MY REVENGE ON YUZAN.
21
OH! SO YOU'RE FINALLY MOTIVATED!



OISHINBO VOLUME 29 -END-

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